MEMOIRS OF J·M·DENT

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1849-1926

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J. M. Dent

THE MEMOIRS OF
J. M. DENT
1849-1926

WITH SOME ADDITIONS
by
HUGH R. DENT

LONDON & TORONTO
J. M. DENT AND SONS LTD.
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PREFACE

THE following Memoirs were written some years ago without any idea of publication. They were meant to be treated as a personal letter from the author to his intimate circle, and a very small number of copies in book form were privately printed in 1921 *and presented to friends and relations.*

Since his death many requests have been made for some public record of his career, and it seemed to me, on thinking the matter over, that nobody could give a clearer or more interesting picture of my father's life than he himself has set down in these Memoirs. He left no personal diary and was not careful to tell his story in strict order, and was often tempted into the bypaths of episode or reflection. My task has been to rearrange and fill up the few gaps in his narrative with some amplifications and elucidations, but in no wise to convert his autobiography into a biography or into a critical estimate of his place in the general scheme. These additions I have tried to keep in character with the original book, and hope they are such as he would himself have wished to make in order to complete the story. If in them at times there lurks a shade of pride in the work accomplished by my father, I am sure it will be forgiven.

His Memoirs give internal evidence of an original character, a marked individuality, developed from inherited tendencies and determined by an innate love of books, along with a keen desire to share this delight with others. He began working life as a craftsman—compositor and bookbinder—

and soon cultivated his intuition for the right thing in print. In youth nurtured on the Bible, and in early manhood on Shakespeare, he reached a faith in the abiding value of literature for himself and others. Thus by occupation and inward calling he became enamoured of the idea of book production and distribution.

His faith in this outlook never wavered, and from it was kindled a belief that he could discover and get help from others to the same end. And as he came into touch with men and women of wider culture than his own, it was found that the very simplicity of his ideals left him free to seek and take without embarrassment the aid they were ready to give to a man of magnetic personality, whose personal contribution of enthusiasm, initiative and indomitable courage, coupled with technical experience, brought about the success of enterprises unique in their day, and now, after having stood the test of time, generally accepted as valuable to the world.

I feel assured that generous readers will not be misled by expressions of satisfaction in personal or business matters into thinking they were set down for self-glorification. For in truth he walked humbly—faithful to the spirit that led him and trustful in the work of others, except perhaps in the practical details of the manufacture of a book.

His gratitude to his forbears, trade associates, learned advisers, gifted illustrators, can be read in his own phrases of clear acknowledgment and obvious sincerity.

As readers can see for themselves, his early home life was happy when poor, and later when freed from the nightmare of poverty and failure. Always his personal habits were briskly cheerful, and even in the last months at Aldine House he was often heard singing some melody which expressed musically to him a state of happiness.

He was abstemious almost to asceticism, and there was no lurking evil in his heart or way of life.

My own debt to him cannot be measured, and as his son and business intimate I must say these few commendatory words (which he could not) in testimony of his long-sustained and unselfish desire to share his joy in good books "in widest commonalty spread."

The additions are printed in slightly smaller type than the text and separated from it by a wavy line. Miss Margaret McMillan's note is also in smaller type, and I am grateful to her for contributing this account of my father's interest in the Nursery School Movement. Miss Vida D. Scudder most kindly sent me copies of my father's letters, from which I have selected those appearing on pages 203 to 220. Mr. F. H. Evans has given me notes of some incidents which were evidently forgotten when the Memoirs were written. To Mr. Ernest Rhys and Mr. S. Bozman I give my warmest thanks for their generous help and valuable advice in the preparation of this book for the press.

H. R. D.

Aldine House,
1928.

J
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THE MEMOIRS OF J. M. DENT

CHAPTER I

Autobiography—A True Picture of a Man—My Father's Folk—Old Yorkshire Stock—The Little Valley of Dent—My Great-Grandfather—Reeth—The Quaker Town of Darlington—George Dent, House-painter and Music-lover—My Birthplace—Archer Street—My Mother: a Woman of the Old School—Early Boyhood—The Paint-shop—A Great Schoolmaster—Walter Scott's Novels—The Riverside Study—A Whirl of Romance.

I SUPPOSE there is enough of the Ego in every man to make his life-story interesting if he can tell it with simplicity and without self-consciousness. No other man could have lived his life, or have been influenced by the same motives or temperament, neither could another have had quite the same environment or used the same opportunities—and character is made up of such things, no life being utterly commonplace or without some interest for its fellows. The difficulty is to write such a life so that it is not a "realistic" portrait in hard lines of dry-as-dust facts, but is set in light and shadow, in the atmosphere created by its circumstance and by the age and times in which it is lived.

Such a picture can only be drawn by a contemporary who had power not only to observe but to choose the essentials—to put them into the right chiaroscuro as it were—to forget himself and be merged in his subject. But geniuses are rare; you can count the great biographers on the fingers of your hands, and as to autobiography, how rarely have we had a true picture of a man drawn by himself! True, Pepys, out of his vanity, did draw an unconscious portrait, unmatched as

far as my reading has gone—but I am quite sure he could never have done it had he ever dreamt it would be exhibited. He fulfils all the essentials of the true biographer with none of the failures of the auto-biographer. But not everyone is gifted with Pepys' superb vanity or his keen enjoyment of the fine frivolities of life.

I am going to attempt, for my own enjoyment, to look down the vista of some sixty or seventy years and tell the tale for anyone who cares to read of my doings upon this earth: what I heard, saw, thought and felt during the years I have lived in it.

. . . . .

I came into a well-stocked household, for my father —George Dent—had already nine sons and daughters to his credit and I made the tenth. Joseph he called me—whether he meant I was an addition to his blessings or his burdens at that time I cannot tell, but true enough it turned out to be the latter, as I know to my everlasting sorrow.

Two more sons followed me, making up the round dozen, but it was an age of large families and was not an uncommon achievement.

This father of ours must have come of good stock, for though born to low estate he was indeed one of nature's gentle-men (I use the hyphen for emphasis, for it most truly describes him). A handsome man, over six feet in his stockings—and that meant something in those days, boot soles being of a widely different thickness from those worn to-day—with a dignified and benignant carriage that always marked him out among men and amongst women, with whom he was ever *persona grata* and to whom he paid chivalric deference.

All the Dent folks I have ever come across seem to

THE BIRTHPLACE OF J. M. DENT

The lower windows have been enlarged and altered.

have migrated from a little valley called Dent up in the North-west Riding of Yorkshire. The name is Danish, signifying a hollow or cup at the foot of a hill, and the little town of Dent is so situated. My father's folk clearly came from there, but gradually wandered eastward as the small fortune of the old yeoman family was split up among many sons. My great-grandfather settled in a little mining town called Reeth and was a farmer there. His son, my grandfather, seemed to be somewhat of a ne'er-do-well and too fond of the bottle, for he had to give up his farm and migrate to Darlington, where with the help of his wife, he managed to eke out a very meagre living, and there my father was born. Our grandmother seems to have been a very capable woman of some refinement, for although her children had to go out into life before they reached their teens, she managed to educate them; I have read many of her sons' letters and I have found none of them illiterate, whilst my father's were always written in a style which had a charm and simplicity of its own.

There my father grew up and married and there his large family was born, for he lived all the years of his life in the quiet town of Darlington, knowing little of the outside world.

Some further notes on Darlington, as it counted in the range of my father's memory, may be added to his own reminiscences here. The connection of his past namesakes with the old town takes us back three hundred years. In the local records the names of other Dents, who came from the place of that name in Swaledale, occur several times. In the list of recusants, for 1608, Jennet and John

[1] Reeth has of later years lost something of its busy life, and its prosperity as a mining-centre by the closing of the lead mines. But ranged round a wide village-green, it has a character all its own and the Swaledale tradition lingers among the people there, good tough West Riding Yorkshire stock.

Dent appear, and a Den Dent received 2d. from the churchwardens in 1630. An entry in 1653: "For a primer for a poore boy, 4d." and in another year: "Given to a poore scholler: XIId." were items much after his own heart; so was one in 1667: "For ale and cakes in Rogation Weeke for the Schollers, 1s. 6d."

At a much later day it is interesting to come upon a real forerunner of his own who became known far beyond the Darlington district as a collector and bookseller, this was Joseph Sams, with whom he must have come into contact in his own early bookbinding experiences as a prentice. Sams published a huge catalogue of rare authors and MSS., and became something of a missionary of books, with a penchant for carrying copies of the Bible into remote countries of the East. Sams recalls a much greater pioneer than he, Charles Knight, whose autobiography, *Passages of a Working Life*, was published in the very year my father left Darlington for London.

He recalled Knight, just as Knight in turn recalled William Cobbett, "who forced his *Register* into every workshop and every cottage, not only by using the plainest English, but by identifying himself with the everyday thoughts of those whom he addressed." In that campaign of the penny-press, *The Plain Englishman* of 1820, the *Penny Magazine* and the *Penny Cyclopædia*, the last of which was appearing in the year Mr. Dent was born, were for him significant events.

In this place I first saw the light on 30 August, 1849. At that time Darlington was a quiet market town largely ruled by Quakers—though the fact that the first railway of the world ran there, and brought the industrial taint in the shape of ironworks and engine shops around it, these were not large enough to disturb its quiet to any serious extent. The influence of the "Friends" was very real, and they shaped the character of the town somewhat to their own fashion. Helpful in every way they believed to be for the moral good of the town—pioneers of education—keen men in commerce (Edward Pease lent to George Stephenson money for his first

railway project)—they were, however, narrow in outlook, and at that time at any rate had a belief that the arts were unspiritual and a snare. So they deprecated music, not even allowing their children to sing psalms; a hymn book was not known in their Sunday Schools; no good Quaker owned a piano, or even, as far as I know, a fiddle. The theatre was taboo, and was not allowed in the town, but had to camp in a wooden barn-like structure in fields beyond the precincts. So strong was this influence that respectable Darlingtonians would not like to have admitted in those days that they had been to the theatre or knew anything about it—and my father and mother *were* respectable and looked upon the theatre as the very gate of Hell —but more of this anon.

The town however, was like us human folk, full of contradictions. It was a stronghold of nonconformity, but had one of the most beautiful of parish churches in the land; it was governed by most unmusical people but had a musical tradition. I have old programmes of concerts held in the early thirties of last century consisting of classical music—Handel, Haydn and Bach for instance—performed by the amateurs of the town, in which my father and his wife took leading parts. The town was set in a beautiful country, yet there was hardly a garden in the place except those of well-to-do Quakers, the houses being huddled together in the usual provincial style with hardly a skimpy back yard to give air space.

The house in which I was born (it is now a public-house) stands in a little mean street, named Archer Street, and was very unpretentious; my father being a painter and decorator had his paint shop in the rear. I have dim recollections of living there and going to a dame's school in the same street when I was three or four years old, but nothing of any vividness remains.

We moved into the main street when I was four, and there life became a reality to me, many impressions being as sharply defined as if I had lived them but yesterday.

We may add here, as showing how vivid these early memories were, one boyish impression he was fond of recalling. It was that of his father and two brothers marching together, three abreast, fine, tall, full-bearded men, down the High Row on their way to some concert together. He contrasted his own small stature humorously with their goodly build, and ended by saying, "They filled up the whole pavement as they went—just the figures to strike a small boy's fancy."

My father was a house-painter because he had been apprenticed to it as a child, but his heart's love was given to music, and he spent his real life in its service. When we went to the house in the High Row, though he still carried on his painting, and had a large paint shop attached to the house, he took on the sale of music and musical instruments and attempted to make that the chief means of livelihood for his family, selling pianos and all kinds of musical instruments in spite of his Quaker environment, and still further to eke out a living for his hungry children he added to his other activities the selling of fishing tackle—not so incongruous after all, perhaps, for is not fishing first among the contemplative sports, even as music is the best expression of all things deeply spiritual?

I am sadly afraid, however, that the dear father forgot the business side of these adventures in his love for and joy in music. For in that he was a true missioner to the town, and in its service he gave all that was best in him. He taught music through all the best years of his life, and had the joy in later years of teaching it even in Quaker schools and Quaker households converted by his religious faith in its value and its necessity for a full life.

In the rambling old house attached to the shop there were many rooms, and the bedroom assigned to us—the three youngest lads—had a little door which led into the paint shop, where my father kept all kinds of strange implements which made fine playthings for adventurous youngsters. The painting business had almost died out when we were old enough to remember such matters, but its paraphernalia was still kept there —paint tins and pots, brushes, ladders, ropes and tackle, besides carpenter's tools, derelict old furniture and, in short, the things that make for the joy of young boyhood and for the mischief it delights to plan.

Now this paint shop was built over two small cottages attached to our house which were let to my father and sublet by him to two families. One was made up of a Scotch gardener with a very irascible wife and three or four sons. The gardener used to leave home very early in the morning, and had therefore to retire betimes in order to get the necessary hours of sleep which the devil incarnate in three restive youngsters was determined to prevent. We had to go to bed early and were tucked in lovingly by the dear mother, but alas! not to sleep, for as soon as the light was taken away and the road was clear we almost nightly began our devilments in the old workshop, the windows of which were immediately over those of the two cottages, and the floor of which formed the ceiling of the bedrooms. We saved up a store of candle ends for these adventures and our revels soon became nightmares to our irascible tenants, who got us into frequent trouble by tales of our revelry related to the authorities with energetic fury by the irate Scotch wife.

We tied buttons or nails to strings and gently tapped on their windows persistently—we put our kitten in a bag which we held by a string just over the top of their window, and its mewing was a mysterious misery to

them. We lowered crackers on to the window-sill, and made them pay for every story they told by retaliations in kind. There was a kind of old speaking-trumpet in the loft which helped us greatly, and I am sorry to say I remember no more perfect joy in all my life than the paying off scores by these gentle devices upon our helpless victims. I have often wondered—since I studied Wordsworth's *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*—what kind of heaven we had come from, and if we learned there these kinds of childish persecutions.

Our mother was one of those women of the old school who totally merged her own personality in that of her husband and children. Gentle, devoted, worn with household cares and the difficulty of making ends meet, she was of that perfectly faithful religious temperament whose idea of a Heaven was a brightly tranquil home with lots of child angels whom she could mother and delight in; where her God was a magnified husband who could in his graciousness and beauty make and keep this ideal household free from all care and worry; where there were no unpaid bills, where all was sunshine and happiness, and where she could enter into the full joy of her Lord; and though limited in scope it was by no means a Heaven to be despised. Her perfect joy was motherhood—one of those "early Victorian" virtues which it would be better for our England to-day if we had better conserved its ideals.

My dear mother was born in Staindrop, a small town in Durham, near the seat of the Duke of Cleveland, and she shared the delightful little conventions of a retired country town that Mrs. Gaskell has pictured with such charming art in *Cranford*.[1] "Respectability" was reckoned among the chief virtues, "respect-

[1] *Cranford* was one of his favourite books. He wrote an introduction to the story for the volume in Everyman's Library.

ability" standing for the studied concealment of all poverty, the careful presentation of oneself in best clothes on the Sabbath, and strict adherence to the conventional forms and ceremonies of the middle classes of those days. Indeed it seemed as much a sin to us boys to go untidily to chapel (for we were strict nonconformists) as to keep the pence we were given for the collection and spend them for our own gratification.

Blessings on her sweet memory—all the good that was or is in any of us we owe to her pure heart and tender ministration.

When I was about ten years old, my father, who had been too trustful of an agent, failed in business, and all he had, including household furniture, was given over to his creditors. We had to move out of our roomy old house and take up quarters in Northgate, a much less prominent position in the town, where my father had to rely entirely on his music teaching and on selling musical instruments and fishing tackle in his shop. It was indeed a bitter time for him, for he felt deeply the humiliation of failure, and much suffering fell upon him from the day he changed houses. Our sister Margaret died while three of us were in bed with fever, and my dear mother at the end of our illness, through overstrain and ceaseless work, was stricken down with paralysis that lasted until her death twelve years afterwards.

The elder brothers and sisters received a somewhat superior education, the boys attending the Elizabethan Grammar School and the girls a good Quaker boarding school in the town. But we three youngsters had the good fortune to be sent to an elementary school just established by the Wesleyans, who by some providential means—for he was by no means a typical Methodist—had secured the services of a really great

schoolmaster, a Mr. Blakelock, to whom the three of us owed a lifelong gratitude. He did not succeed in making scholars of any of us—we were not built that way—but he taught us finer things; he made us care for books, he showed us how to play, and he taught us a strict code of honour which he practised himself, and though many a time I have broken away from it in my long life, it has always been with real shame and contrition. He had a fine taste for literature—at least so it seemed to me—and urged reading upon us for its own sake. He was something of a musician, he had natural refinement, spoke good English, and was clearly a different type from the ordinary elementary-school teacher of his time. Later he went to America and was successful there. I am glad to bear this testimony to one to whom I gave enough trouble while under his charge, for he was to me a model schoolmaster, and my association with him has been helpful to me all my life. Through his influence I began reading after a desultory fashion when I was about ten or eleven years old, and though my study was not of a very intellectual order, I formed the habit of reading which has never since been broken.

My father in his little shop kept a miscellaneous stock, amongst which were some of Scott's novels, and having heard my schoolmaster speak of them, I began to read and did not leave off until I had devoured every book. Many a day have I played truant to slip down to the riverside and lie in the field with one of the magician's stories as my companion, forgetting the hours and irksome duties, to live in delight upon the heath with Rob Roy, or fight with Redgauntlet, or chat with the old Dominie. What a whirl of romance it was and what a high joy! Here again I was lucky to have come early to such good pasture, for Scott is full of the wholesome fresh air, and to all who read him he

gives the sense of largeness, of strength and vigorous manhood, of life worth living, of courage and hardihood. I think I had read all the novels before I was twelve years old, and they have been a precious possession ever since.

I was a complete dullard at school, succeeding in nothing, not even learning to spell (I cannot do it yet), and I left it to go to work at the age of thirteen. I was, as I have always remained, a very desultory, dreamy, "feckless" sort of boy, absent-minded to a degree, naturally indisposed to think consecutively or to express my thoughts clearly. I remember many times leaving my school satchel and my slate (which every boy had to carry at that time) leaning near some shop window which had attracted my attention, and remembering no more about them until I sat down to do my home lessons, and many a penalty had I to pay for this weakness. Indeed, I have often marvelled how I ever came to be a business man at all, for I never had any idea of system nor any ordered way of working or thinking from my childhood up.

One can still make out the lines of the older Darlington of sixty or seventy years ago that the boy knew, when exploring the busy town of to-day. From the Market-place, the North Gate to which his father moved after his unlucky failure runs on, a long rambling street, to one end of the town. The High Row, where the house-painter's shop and dwelling stood, leads out of the purlieus on the west. There one still comes on old red-tiled roofs and weathered brick houses that call up the quiet Quaker town of his early years. Needless to say, after his own account of the town as he knew it, that he kept to the end a fond memory of it, and recalled with pride the days when it was said to have "the finest market-place in the north-country," and to make the best huckaback.

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CHAPTER II

I begin my Career—Arts and Crafts—The Absent-minded Prentice—Bookbinding—Sandy Robinson—High Row—The Lame Lad—The Barn Theatre—Stage-struck—Boswell's *Johnson*—The Way to Olympus—Dickens—The Mid-Victorian Magazines—The Bible and its Glorious English.

MY first employment was as a kind of messenger-boy and ticket-collector to an Art Exhibition sent down to Darlington from the Kensington Museum—it was open for some three months—in which period lectures on the different Arts and Crafts of the world were given. I had the privilege of walking round with the lecturer, and at least I got hold of a little of the romance of art as illustrating the life and habit of many different nations; and the impression was vivid enough to remain with me.

One other impression was still more indelible. It was the year of the marriage of Prince Edward and Princess Alexandra, the late King and Queen, and all the country was *en fête*. On a certain day there was to be in our town a children's gala. All the boys and girls were invited out to some great man's estate where they were feasted and all kinds of fun and gaiety prepared for them. There was a children's concert which my father conducted, and I know not what besides, but I had to be on duty at the Exhibition; so valuable were my services at thirteen that I could not be spared!

I began my career in earnest by going to a printer to be apprenticed as an all-round workman, that is to say, both compositor and pressman, while learning all the minor arts of a full craftsman, such as roller-

making, casting leads, etc. But I am afraid my desultory ways exasperated my employer, and he told me I would never make a printer because I always forgot what came next. The fact was I was much more taken up with the idea of bookbinding, which was carried on in the same workshop. It fascinated me in every way and I was only too glad to transfer my poor efforts to the learning of that craft, to which ever since I have been devoted. I had, however, been long enough at printing to get at least an insight into both composition and press work, which has proved invaluable to me in later life; for though my thinking has always been desultory some things have a way of sticking to my memory and coming up in times of emergency.

I went to work with a Mr. Rutherford, who had come from Kelso and set up business as a bookbinder in Darlington. He was a good craftsman himself, at least he was able to undertake any branch of the art —which, by the by, is rarely the case with the London workman—and do it with a certain amount of skill. He could gild or marble edges, he could bind a book in whatever style was needed from cloth boards to the most elaborate morocco; he could finish it, that is, he could put the gilding on the leather in the conventional style he had been taught, for he had no idea of design himself, and complete the book from beginning to end. There are few such craftsmen at the present time, I fear; the binding of a book is now split up into four or five different parts and no one man has the joy of producing the complete thing.

My employer was dependent upon itinerant workmen—nearly always Scotch—who were "on the road," walking from town to town taking what jobs they could get, and going frequently at their own sweet will when they were tired of the work or the town, going "on

THE MARKET PLACE, DARLINGTON

their luck," as they called it, from place to place. A jolly life and free, but rather embarrassing to the employer. I worked therefore with an ever-changing group of shopmates who through their itinerant life had always some interesting and characteristic story of different experiences to tell, which made life appear bigger and more adventurous than it did to most apprenticed lads in the town. They had, of course, the usual Scotch weakness for whisky; indeed that was generally the cause of their itinerancy, for they were mostly good workers but liable to "bouts," and because of this it was not safe to lend them money or help with any advance on wages. One or two of them were even noted workers. I remember one Sandy Robinson, to whom all the itinerants looked up with awe and respect, for besides being a first-rate workman, he was a man of some book learning and able to make a "grand speech" when the whisky was in him. He was of a fine presence, went about in a worn-out broadcloth frock-coat and took the homage of his fellows as if it were his due. Indeed a great craftsman is worthy of the devotion of his fellows. The man who can *do* things as well as think them is among the greatest, and no failings will destroy men's respect for his capacity. Even now when I see a fine bit of "forwarding" the splendid figure of Sandy Robinson comes before my memory as the representative of things great in bookbinding. Alas! poor Sandy often spent the night in the "drunk" cells and had to have a "wee drap" in the morning before his hand was steady enough to finish his work.

During those early boyish days I was thrown a good deal on my own resources because of my lameness. In infancy either through some paralysis of the left side or through a burn on the calf of my leg the sinews were drawn up, forcing me to walk on my toes. The cause

of this trouble was never decided, but an operation let my foot down to the level of the ground, though it left me very lame. I could not play in games that required running or robustness, so I was compelled to find other amusements for myself.

After leaving the High Row we lived next door but one to a shop kept by a celebrated purveyor of milk who was known the town through as Joe Waites, whose wife kept a confectioner's shop and made the most delicious muffins and tea-cakes. Joe served the best part of the town with milk and was a well-known character. Thrifty and hard-working, he had in his small way become a man of property. Among many other avocations he was a merchant of firewood which his old father—who was a cripple—sawed up in a cellar beneath the shop. Now this couple were indulgent parents, especially to their eldest boy who was a lad of parts and was doing well at school. They allowed him a select number of companions—including my brothers and myself—to meet almost every evening in the cellar where this wood was chopped up, and there we discussed the questions of the day, especially those of a drum-and-fife band that we formed. The instruments were obtained from my father's shop in payment of a long milk score owed to the said Joseph Waites, he taking payment in pennies a week contributed by the said companions. But the chief reason of my regular attendance was to hear the latest talk of their experience at the theatre, to which, as I have said, we were on no account allowed to go, while they had access by paying threepence every Saturday night for a gallery seat. I listened enthralled as they talked of their favourite actors, tragic and comic. The plays of which they told the stories excited me and I could not rest until I had entered that strange world of romantic wonder. I still remember the first night I found

MONSOON VARIATION

myself there, fascinated by a play which I think must have been Sheridan Knowles's *Virginius*, for it had a Roman setting, and took me far away from things mundane into a world of imagination which has haunted me ever since. I have dreamed about that first night quite lately. Having once tasted blood the theatre became the one desire of my boyish life, and I would perpetrate any meanness, deceive the home-folk by any kind of prevarication, get money how and where I could—it was only threepence a night—that I might be thrilled with excitement in melodrama, and romance and farawayness in Shakespearean comedy and tragedy. And that was the most thrilling of all for boys; plenty of fighting for beautiful damsels, and blood and thunder was a great joy. Night after night I crept to the old Barn, and on the following mornings had to deal with a conscience loaded with guilt after the untruths told to my parents and the subterfuges I had used to get away undetected.

At last came my undoing. One night the play had been unusually long—I think it was Tom Taylor's *Ticket-of-Leave Man*—and I was late in leaving. On coming out of the theatre door to run home I was gripped on each arm by my father and elder brother Hugh and marched home in dead silence to bed. All my untruths were exposed and my father's trust in me completely shaken. I was forbidden, of course, under heavy penalties to go near the theatre again, and perhaps I promised obedience quite honestly, but alas! the attraction was too strong, and besides I had the luck to make the acquaintance of a member of the orchestra (consisting of three persons), who had bought of me some fiddle-strings in my father's shop, and frequently got free passes, and he introduced me to the household of a young fellow whose name I cannot now recall. The father played the "heavy villain" and, like many stage

villains, had the kindest of hearts, and was indeed a most lovable and genial character, with a good deal of fine humour. The mother played sometimes in old lady parts, while the two sons made up two-thirds of the orchestra, which was very powerful indeed, for, aided by "metaphysical art," the second violin played the drum and triangle together with his fiddle and so trebled the musical effect. He also at times changed the fiddle for the cornet, so that we were not without a delightful variety.

By these kind friends I was introduced to some of the other actors, and so rabid a theatre haunter did I become that I left home for several nights, staying with one of the actors at his lodgings (he was only a "walking-on gentleman" who had to double many parts). Indeed I had some idea of leaving the town with them and going in for the profession, and it was not at all impossible that I should have done some mad thing or other, but my old friend the "heavy villain" kindly advised me to go home, for it was no living for such as me, and hinted that my lameness would entirely disqualify me for even a "walking-on gentleman." So I returned crestfallen, confessed my sins and was easily forgiven.

In all this time my boyish mind was in great turmoil, for on the stage, even from the crudest melodrama, I was being taught a code of morals. Amongst all the high-falutin sentiment right and wrong were very clearly defined, for the audience would have nothing else. My good friend the "heavy" was almost nightly hissed off the stage though he was the best actor, while the hero, who defended a just cause, was cheered to the echo. The play was the thing and the actor, so long as he was robustious enough and could fight well, did not so much matter. I can truly say that in all the plays I saw in this old Barn I remember none that had the least taint of sensuality in it, and almost

every one of them pointed a moral or called for heroic deed. There were no farces in those days whose fun was drawn from the unfaithfulness of husband and wife, nor any sexual "problem" plays. They would not have been tolerated. Life may have been simpler then, it certainly was not less hard, but at least it would have nothing to do with uncleanness on the stage. I remember many years ago going a round of the East End theatres, such as the "Britannia" in Hoxton, the Theatre in Whitechapel, and the "Old Vic," but never came across anything so unwholesome or immoral as may be found in West End theatres, though no doubt the audiences enjoyed a coarse joke.

Now the problem that arose in my mind was this: the play to which I had been listening always caused some pricking of conscience as to the purity of my motives. Comparing myself with the noble hero, and seeing how far I was below him in chivalry and in the fighting against wrong. How was it that I could so basely deceive my parents and do all kinds of mean tricks in order to stir my conscience? It seemed good to me to be stirred to repentance, but the means to the end was despicable.

What wonderful times they were, and what wonderful plays! They were *The Lady of Lyons, Black-eyed Susan, Virginius, The School for Scandal, The Ticket-of-Leave Man, Rob Roy,* and a host of others—for we had a new play almost every night. One wishes one could see them all again in a long succession. And then we often had Shakespeare—*Richard III., Othello, The Merchant of Venice, Hamlet,* being the favourites. I remember most vividly a star performance of *Othello* when I was a boy of about fourteen. Some well-known actor, whose name I have forgotten, came down to play the leading rôle, and on this occasion only the lessee of the theatre, a man called Day, played Iago.

He really was a monstrous villain, for he stood six feet six inches high, and with lean shanks dressed in white tights and his body in a red velvet tunic, held by enormous buttons stuck on here and there which shone very finely, with an enormous ostrich feather waving over his hat, he was indeed a sight to please the gods. Poor Othello, the hero of a thousand fights, looked a pigmy beside him. When Iago spoke—his mouth being very large you could see each movement of his articulation—his big sonorous voice filled all the building. When he put his great paw on the shoulder of Cassius, a slightly built man of about five feet four inches, you feared he would crush him to the earth.

But the play, in spite of the meagre scenery (for costumes are much more easily extemporised than scenery is painted), was a glory for all that, and if I am not prejudiced, the lines of Shakespeare's blank verse were better spoken then than they are to-day in most theatres. Let me except Frank Benson's company as I remember it in the early days.

I should like to call up again many of my experiences at the dear old Barn, if only my impressions were sharp enough and I could remember names and occasions. We had a comedian called Wallet, who claimed the honour of being the brother of the Queen's jester (fancy Queen Victoria keeping a court jester!), and he was in our opinion a wonderful fellow. There was a great deal of sympathy between the audience and the players, and all the "characters" of the town were known to the leading actors. Now there were two Irishmen, one called, I think, O'Grady and the other Mullen, who in ordinary life were not to be divided but inclined to be troublesome in their cups. They were regular attendants at the theatre on Saturday nights and not unfrequently disturbed the play. Wallet

(as was the fashion in those times) frequently had an interlude of his own between the acts, and on one occasion was much interrupted by a row in the gallery, whereupon he struck a tragic attitude and with glaring eyes and stentorian voice cried: "Shakespeare says he will give O'Grady a quart of beer if he will put Mullen out." Whereupon Mullen at once disappeared down the rickety stairs and peace was restored.

I remember, too, how my friend the "heavy villain" frequently disillusioned me, absorbed in some tragic scene, by deliberately winking at me in the orchestra where I often sat with his boys who played the two fiddles. Ah me! with all the drawbacks they were days of real romance to which the theatre of these later years is but the "light of common day."

But all this was a great grief to my parents and to all those who cared for my moral upbringing, hence they strove hard to bring me under what they considered better influence. It happened favourably for their scheme that the company of the old Barn left the town and the theatre for the time being was closed. The more easily was I drawn by them, and especially by my dear brother Hugh, to take some interest in their chapel and the various societies connected with it. It happened that opportune revival meetings were held, too, about this time and I was persuaded to go. I did try most earnestly to be "converted" and went to what they called the Penitent Form and waited for the miracle that was to transform my life and make me supremely happy, lifting from me the ever-present and vivid consciousness of sin. I tried to give up everything—my boy's will—my longings for things believed to be evil, hoping to bring my heart and mind into conformity with the ideals of those around me, and the struggle was great. However, I rose from my knees without the wonderful transformation looked

for. Though confessing belief that I was converted, to the joy of my dear father and mother, it gave great unhappiness to myself because I knew that none of their hopes had been realised and that while I had resolved to change my life the "vision splendid" was not mine.

However, I began to attend chapel meetings with my brother and became interested in what was then called a Mutual Improvement Society, where I found the members studied a book one week and in the alternate week listened to and criticised a paper prepared by one of them. Oh these two books! One was Paley's *Evidences of Christianity* and the other *Jonathan Diamond's Essay*. Strange books wherewith to impress the young mind with the beauty and joy of Christ's religion! Yet they set us thinking, and their logical way of putting things helped my desultory mind a little even while they repelled me utterly.

But one good thing grew out of this little Society for which I have ever been grateful. The members were asked to write papers on alternate weeks, and they urged me to do so. Always of a very ambitious disposition, I was anxious to shine among my elders. I consented, though what to write about at the moment never entered my head. A paper on Samuel Johnson was suggested, and while knowing no more of him than that my father had his dictionary on his shelves, I accepted the suggestion and began to read about him in books recommended to me. Curiously enough I read Macaulay's essay even before I read Boswell, and it revealed my complete ignorance in telling about dozens of people evidently very famous, of whom I had never heard. Therefore I set to and tackled Boswell. It was hard work at first (I was only fifteen years old), but as it went on I became interested, not so much in Johnson as in the men who surrounded him;

and I was amazed that these greater men, as they seemed to me, should bow down before this old Juggernaut and allow him to walk over them, insult them, blaze out at them and treat them as if they were his inferiors—men like Edmund Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds and Oliver Goldsmith, with a host of others. At last it dawned upon me that it was not the ponderous, clumsy, dirty old man that they worshipped, but the scholarship for which he stood. I grew to love many of Johnson's friends more than Johnson, but I quickly learnt to worship at the same altar, and I bless the day that brought me into touch with Boswell's *Life*. I got up from the book feeling there was nothing worth living for so much as literature, otherwise how could this uncouth man rule over such a company? To write a book seemed to me to be the only way to gain Olympus, and I am very much of the same opinion to-day, but it must be *literature*.

From this time forward I began to read regularly but, if it is not paradoxical, with the utmost desultoriness, frequently having two or three books on hand at a time and never working with definite purpose. I tried to learn French, but to my great loss proved incapable of assimilating it or any other language. Books, however, have been the great solace and help of my life, and it has been my supreme happiness to have been associated with literature all my days, even though only as a door-keeper of the Temple.

My reading of Boswell's *Johnson* was followed by a study of Goldsmith and some eighteenth-century literature, arising out of my essay on Johnson. Some years later I came to know Dickens in his fullness, and the eighteenth-century novelists—Fielding, Sterne, Richardson, Smollett. I knew little of Shakespeare before I was twenty-one. Indeed there was no teaching of Shakespeare in our everyday schools in those

days. It seems to me that provincial England was still very puritan in the sixties and seventies—even Dickens was not read as now, though *Pickwick* and the *Christmas Carol* were known in most households. It was not till my London days that I got into touch with anything like a broad field of literature. I had, however, read *The Pilgrim's Progress*, used as a companion to the Bible, something of Milton, which, however, I could not assimilate, something of Cowper, something of Thomson's *Seasons* and Young's *Night Thoughts*. Some of the modern fiction became known to me through magazines, such as *Good Words* and *Cornhill*. Charles Kingsley, George Meredith and Thackeray all appeared in magazines, and one read them in that way. I also remember Anthony Trollope in *Cornhill*, and in *The Quiver* as a boy made my first acquaintance with Mrs. Henry Wood. One cannot help feeling how sadly our periodical literature has declined since those mid-Victorian days. There is no magazine with the literary quality of those that have passed away. Indeed many of our modern magazines have fallen to low estate—filled with puerile short stories and sensational matter of the lowest order, and are only fit for trivial amusement. I read with avidity all the publications that came in my way and remember vividly Charles Kingsley's *Hereward the Wake* coming out in *Good Words*, and how eagerly I looked for its appearance in each number. It was the only way in which I could get at modern fiction, for the "yellow back," the form of the cheap novel of the period, was taboo in our household.

When I began business as a bookbinder many an hour was taken up by dipping into books I was binding, which had to be made up by working late into the night; but serious literature had little attraction for me, excepting some poetry—Tennyson's for instance.

Science had no lure, nor even travel, while essays were more tempting. I am afraid my failure to appreciate serious reading was owing to a lack of concentration and to desultory habits. I had none of the habits of a student, and though not without appreciation of "high thinking," could not think with satisfactory continuity. I read a good deal of the Bible, but some of my familiarity and memories of it come from constant touch with the oratorios, popular in my youth, which through my father's musical habits were frequently sung in our household. Yet its power has clung to me all my life: expression of high emotion comes best through its glorious English, and no poetry ever reaches such altitudes or lifts up the spirit so completely above the mundane. Its imagery far transcends any other in satisfying the mind's exaltation.

I was nearly thirty before I began to know Shakespeare seriously. I had of course seen some of the plays at rare intervals, and had the usual knowledge of some of "his beauties," but my reading of the plays had been casual, and it was long before I realised this treasure and how indispensable it was for the comprehension of humanity in all its phases and humours. With fuller acquaintance, it proved illuminating to read the plays in chronological order, and see the poet gradually shedding the surplusage of his youth—though, alas! most of the joy went with it —and find the philosopher, the sage, the prophet, and the greatest of poets emerge, with supremely complete knowledge of the human heart, with exact valuing of man's nature. His creative power it was that enabled him to breathe life into the dead leaves of an old story, make men out of shadows, and "give to airy nothing a local habitation and a name." These and the other joys of his art, which come fresh and are ever new, have been mine

now for forty years. More than even the Bible he taught me that divine charity that finds good in everything; and now, looking back, let me say—publisher though I am, and a maker of books without end—that a man who puts aside others' interpretations, and studies with unprejudiced mind his English Bible and his Shakespeare, need lack very little of all that appertains to right thinking and true manhood. He will of course miss many side-lights, much of the detail of life—perhaps some minor pleasures and entertainment, but nothing of the higher enjoyment of great thinking, of broad outlooks, of high principles, of zest for noble endeavour, of a perfect charity, of forbearance, of justice and right. He will find high humour, a close touch with nature, a tenderness and compassion, that no other books will give him, with an imagination and faith that reach to great heights, and an outlook beyond the grave. If he wants to verify and test the truth of life in these two libraries of human experience and prophetic insight, he must read widely that he may know the human story so far as it has been told, and must even study philosophy and science. But so far as my poor reading goes he may wander, through a labyrinth of perplexing intricacy and wearying lengths, only to find that, if his studies have not taken him to the slough of despond, they have at best only brought him back to the things to be learnt in their broadness and fullness from the Bible and Shakespeare. In them, if he will, he may learn the whole duty of man: "To do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God." I have said that a man may find all he *needs* in these two libraries—but what he *wants* is a very different matter, and an infinite amount of books will hardly satisfy him; he is always wanting more, for has he not eaten of the tree of knowledge of good and evil?

Since becoming a publisher I have ranged extensively

over the field of English literature, and enjoyed many Russian novels in translation and read much of the Greek and Roman classics, also of course in translation; especially of late years have I read Plato, much to my profit, particularly the Socratian dialogues. Alas! much of the time of a publisher is taken up with reading MSS. not five per cent of which he can ever hope to publish, and the hours which useless MSS. absorb take away the time needed to explore the great stores of new and old literature.

My chief interest has been round about Shakespeare and the Elizabethans, but I have had great pleasure too in tracing the sources of the novel and the short story and their development. My reading has been necessarily related to my craft, and I am afraid it has, from time to time, given me a kind of literary indigestion. If I have had to read much I would rather not have read, I do know the joys of a library, and a man is never alone, never without enthusiasms or delights, if he can once enter the fellowship of books. After Shakespeare I have had most joy from Wordsworth, Shelley, Browning and Tennyson. Burns has always been part of my life since boyhood.

HAMLET

CHAPTER III

Departure for London—The "Parliamentary Train"—"Pierce Penniless"—First Impressions—The Bucklersbury Bookbinder—A Twelve-hour Working-Day—Married Life—Setting-up House—The First-Born—Early Struggles—From Featherstone Street to East Road—A Stroke of Luck—No. 69 Great Eastern Street—The Shoreditch Vestryman—(Some Boyish Reminiscences).

WHEN I had been with Mr. Rutherford for two or three years he failed in business, and I had once more to seek some way of learning my craft. I had a real love for it and had set up a hand-press in my bedroom and did some work for myself and as many odd jobs as I could pick up in the town. But I had no money nor was I competent enough to begin business at this time, so after wasting a year, it was arranged that I should go to London—there my elder brother had preceded me and was at the head of one of the departments at Messrs. Waterlow and Sons, the great printers—there I might finish my apprenticeship.

I remember as if it were yesterday coming up to London on the 7th of August 1867, when nearly eighteen years old. At that time there ran what was called a "Parliamentary" train, which meant that railways were compelled to run a train once a day the whole length of the line at a fare of a penny per mile. Before the war the customary rate for all trains in Great Britain had been a penny a mile for many years, but at the time I speak of there was an extra charge for every train but the "Parliamentary." This stopped at all stations from Darlington to London, a distance of

about 240 miles, and took from nine o'clock in the morning till seven or eight o'clock at night, and was always crowded.

My dear father had as much as he could do to equip me with a box of clothes and pay my fare, and there was only 2s. 6d. for my pocket, out of which I had to get something to eat on the journey. I remember being sandwiched in between two stout middle-aged ladies and remained so all the way to London. It was an August day, as I have said, and very hot, so I had a sweltering time of it. Now by some mischance they had forgotten to furnish me with my brother's address in writing, thinking that as I had written it many times I could remember it. Alas! memory played me a scurvy trick; not for the world could I remember the number of the house, though the name of the street was familiar, and by mischance my brother, who was to have met me, was detained at the office, and I landed in London remembering only that the name of the street I wanted was Copenhagen Street, and for anything I knew it might be twelve miles away from the station. I had with me a great box and 1s. 6d. left out of my half-crown. The porter got me a cab and as I could not tip him I was blessed accordingly. I gave the cabman the number as nearly as I could remember and he drove me to it, only to find that no such person as H. R. Dent lived there. What was to be done? My 1s. 6d. was given to the cabman and I was left penniless in the street with my box. There was nothing to do but ask the people at whose door I stood to take in my box until I could find my brother, which they very kindly consented to do. Meanwhile there I was in London without the address of anyone who could help me. It looked a pretty difficult situation, and remember that then there was no means of finding any address, such as the telephone

or directory. Well, I came to the conclusion that the only thing to do was to set off and knock at every door —no small task when there were three hundred or four hundred houses—and that somehow I might chance on the right number. In despair I had just made up my mind to begin at the bottom of the street when I met my brother coming out of the house in great perturbation. Having found I had not arrived, he was hurrying to the station to see what had happened. Well, my misery was soon turned into complete satisfaction when I sat down to a comfortable meal—prepared, by the by, by a little lady who was to become my wife. After that I was plunged into utter amazement and delight by my brother's taking me to see a wonderful fairyland of an exhibition at the Agricultural Hall, which had been prepared in honour of the Sultan of Turkey, who was at that time our "loyal and esteemed ally" on a visit to London.

The exhibition was continued to please the public for a few nights, and what a marvellous thing it was to me. The enormous hall was lit up with millions of jets; a large fountain played right in the middle, and coloured lights passed over it changing continually; massed army bands played Jullien's British Army Quadrilles in very dramatic fashion, and the whole thing made me feel as if I had dropped into a new world, as indeed it was to me this first night in London.

As for my actual work, I first went to a small bookbinder named Hipkins who had his workshop in Bucklersbury, out of Cheapside—the very name of such a street suggested romance, especially to a reader of Sir Walter Scott's novels. My remuneration was to be 12s. 6d. a week as a turnover apprentice, and as my bare lodgings cost me 14s., my brother generously made up the difference, leaving me my overtime pay, such as it was, for clothes and pocket-money. It is worth recording that the hours I worked were from

8 a.m. to 8 p.m., with one hour for dinner and half an hour for tea, and quite frequently we worked till 10 p.m., after which I had to walk home to King's Cross. There was no margin for bus fares in those days, and the walk took three-quarters of an hour to an hour, for I was lame and had sore feet. Nothing is more vivid in my life than those tortured walks home after a long day's standing, limping along painfully and through a crowd in utter and complete loneliness. I was provincial and had come from a town where I knew almost every face, many friendly ones, but here I found myself looking continually for a kindly hail and met absolute indifference everywhere. I shall never forget the sense of complete forlornness which came over me night after night, and how thankful I was to reach our lodgings where were light and warmth and kindly faces. Alone in London! there is nothing more awful to a sensitive mind; you learn once and for all that you are as dust in the balance and of no consequence living or dead.

The years of my life in London from eighteen to twenty-one were uneventful except that I became an engaged man. Working as I did from 8 a.m. to 8 and often till 10 p.m. there was not much time for anything else but sleep, for even on Saturdays we did not leave till four o'clock, and yet somehow I seemed to get to a good many meetings and found time to go courting with a good many girls of my acquaintance. For then, even as now, I had a great weakness for the sex, and in the beginning, as in the end, they never did me anything but good.

My brother and I lodged with a widow whose name was Mrs. Pook and two young ladies named Wiggins who helped her to keep house, or, rather, shall I say, kept house for her, for it would never have held together but for them. Besides my brother and I there were

two other lodgers, and the top floor was let to a young couple who were friends of our landlady. The household was a chapel-going one and we had many things in common, so that we formed almost a family party. The little lady who had waited upon me the first night I arrived soon made me her devoted follower, and before I was twenty-one I became engaged to her. She was some years older than I, but I was always older than my years, so that we found no disparity in that respect.

Having finished my apprenticeship, and having the promise of work at twenty-eight shillings a week, and the widow Pook resolving to marry again, the household was broken up. My *fiancée* being without a home and having to work for her living, we made up our minds to marry and work together and have all the fun of building up a home for ourselves. And so we did, without a stick of our own, our only wedding presents being a second-hand feather bed, a pretentious wedding (for which we afterwards found we had to pay), and a wedding breakfast kindly given to us by George Lomax, a famous teetotal lecturer of that day, after which we went quietly off to Limehouse to two furnished rooms let to us by a brother of my wife's who was a dock-master there.

Well, we had a happy hard-working life, saving hard to buy up bits of furniture, for we both hated living in other folks' rooms, and in a very few months we moved into two rooms in Clifton Street, near Finsbury Square, which were our very own and we furnished for cash down. It was a delicious piece of happiness every week almost to go out and cheapen things to add to our household gods. The humiliation I had to bear through my wife frequently earning more money than I did was compensated for by seeing her sheer happiness in spending it.

It was not long before we had taken the full respon-

sibility of a house where we still worked together and even took in lodgers to eke out the rent. Before I was twenty-three our first boy was born, and this instalment of a family coming quickly to us, roused me to see that unless I made some great effort, my wife would have to go on toiling all her life to keep the children; for twenty-eight shillings a week, even in those days, did not go very far, although it was augmented by overtime in the winter. Alas! we had slack time in summer, and every penny counted.

It happened that a friend of mine, named Nat Brooks, a bookbinder, came to live with us (a far better workman than I), who had begun business but had failed to work it up and had returned to the bench. He had bits of his old plant left and I bought them for five pounds or so, which he was to take out in payment for lodgings. I burnt my ships and started business as a bookbinder in a workshop in Hoxton that cost me three shillings a week! My wife had largely to sustain the household for some weeks while I was gathering some work together, but by the help of my brother, who introduced me to Waterlow and Sons, and my good fortune in getting orders from the Civil Service Stores through the help of an errand boy whom I employed, I soon had more than I could do, and had to hire a boy and sometimes a man to help me before the first year was out.

Soon I moved from my three-shillings-a-week shop to one at double the rent in Featherstone Street, nearer the City, and there an idea struck me which, if carried through, would enable me, as it were, to kill two birds with one stone. I had noticed that booksellers had books bound in leather in their windows, and I knew that they bought the books in sheets from the publishers and had them bound by their own bookbinder. Now I thought if I could say to the publishers that I would

buy their sheets if they would give me some work in contra account, I could then bind the sheets and sell to the bookseller, and so make work in two ways. The idea worked out well as far as giving me plenty of work to do, but the profit was not so obvious, though, of course, I was able to contribute more fully to the household expenses, yet I was not earning a living wage in spite of continuous toil. Still my wife was very proud that by her aid I had established a business, and was most cheerful and faithful in bearing her heavy share of the burden; but the children were coming, our second son was born before I was twenty-five, and my wife's hands were full, and still my business was not enough to sustain us because I had continually to add to the little plant, and pecuniary pressure became severe.

Yet we were happy and eager, and took risks. We moved into a larger house, 139 East Road, and even had two or three apprentices (the eldest, Harry Benwell, is with me yet) to live with us, with whom we had premiums which helped us for the time being, and in a year or two we required more room. We moved over the way to 124 East Road and built our own workshop over the little gardens at the back of the premises, borrowing the money at ten per cent interest. We hardly got settled there before what appeared to be a great stroke of luck happened to us. My old employer Mr. Price, with whom I had served the last year of my apprenticeship, and for whom I had worked as a journeyman, died and his little business was for sale for the small sum of £250. It seemed a tremendous bargain, for I knew he had employed a dozen or more men and many more women, but where was I to get the purchase money? I was already loaded with the mortgage on my workshop and found it hard to pay the wages every week. But the thing was too good

to let pass without an effort, as both my wife and I thought, so we looked about for help. We had a year before taken a dwelling-house in New North Road from George Carter, a grocer in a large way, who had been glad to get rid of his lease, and who had already helped me by loaning me some small capital at a reasonable interest. I determined to lay the matter before him, but though a genial, kindly fellow, he gave me a severe lecture and said I ought to pay back the old loan before venturing on any new enterprise. However, I persuaded him to go and look at it, and he was so convinced it was a good thing that he lent me the money and I bought it.

And now I thought my fortune made. Alas! the best-laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley. The lease of the premises in which the little business was carried on ran out and though when I purchased it I was promised a renewal, the landlord repented and refused to renew, therefore as the premises I had built for my own business were too small to contain the two, I had to seek a larger building to enable me to work both under one roof. This meant abandoning the houses on the gardens of which I had built the workshop, fitting up a larger place, and taking the responsibility of the building, 69 Great Eastern Street, at £250 a year. Fortunately I was able to sublet a substantial portion of the premises. Meanwhile, family responsibility was still growing; I had three children living and had lost one. I tried hard to do without borrowing any more money, but alas! I was compelled to seek it wherever it could be got, and my kind friend Mr. Carter helped me until I felt utterly ashamed to ask him further. Moreover, what with interest, the loss of rent on my old premises, and the unremunerative character of the work, I found myself getting deeper and deeper into debt, with hardly any hope of paying

off the principal, while the task of providing wages each week became a torture and a humiliation the recollection of which makes me shudder even now. Many a Friday night came without knowing from whence the wages were to come for the morrow, and all through the week terror was upon me as to how they were to be met.

Mr. Lardner, a tailor, from whom I had taken the lease of the ground on which I had built my workshop at 124 East Road, took great interest in what I was doing and became a most helpful and sympathetic friend. I can hardly tell how much I owed to him in those awful days. Many a time did he help me through the terrible week-ends. He was not a moneyed man himself, but got his friends to help, and I was often borrowing money on Saturday to be paid back on Monday, so that the agony frequently began again by the beginning of the week and lasted all through. I dream of those days now sometimes, and would not endure them again for a wilderness of fortunes.

It had its humorous side sometimes, and the way of getting over difficulties may be illustrated by the fact that one day I was so closely run for money that I went and asked my friend for the loan of half a crown and he had not half a crown to spare, but asked what my difficulty was, and I said, "We have no butter in the house and want some for breakfast." "Oh! well," he said, "there are more ways of getting over that difficulty than one." He had a neighbour who kept a chandler's shop, and immediately went there, got the butter on credit, and we were satisfied.

"Often in the course of the Everyman campaign"—writes one of his colleagues—"the Chief would pause to recall his early days in London. He had a keen, but erratic personal memory, and liked to picture the bookbinder's shop and bench in Featherstone Street where he first set

up on his own account which reminded one of Simon Eyre's house and yard in *The Shoemaker's Holiday*. There were traces of the same impulsive impatient humour in both sets of master and men. And luckily some of those who worked for him at that time are still bookbinding at Letchworth in the great book-factory he built, and their reminiscences help to eke out his own. He has spoken already of the apprentice he used to call Harry,—Harry Benwell. At a Garden City Christmas party, in reminiscent vein, he spoke of another Harry, H. W. Bloom (now binder and house-agent at Letchworth). Nothing is more interesting, as addition to his own story, than to go to the huge printing and binding works, watch the monotypes and quick-folding and binding machines busy over 'Everyman' and the 'Kings Treasuries,' and then talk over old times with these veterans. Mr. Bloom remembers a time when his old master's bindery was in a couple of rude sheds built over a back-yard, or even in a converted kitchen of his house in Red Cross Street (near Cripplegate Church). He was a mere boy when one day he saw a young bookbinder, wearing what for his age seemed a very long dark beard, come limping with a parcel of books into a bindery near the Barbican. Later he was bound apprentice, and went to work for that same young bookbinder at Red Cross Street in the city. There he learnt to respond with a will to his new master's determination to see the work well done. Still later, after some years in other service, he returned to the firm, then settled in Great Eastern Street, and from that time served the Chief up to the end.

"One gusty wet August day, chance led me to Letchworth on a visit to some of the veterans who had once been his journeymen or his apprentices. A mighty contrast to the small bindery near the Barbican, was this many-roofed City of Books, humming and clacking with its machines and its busy regiment of workers. The scene recalled his vivid picture of the lame lad from Darlington, who journeyed to London exactly sixty years ago, also on an August day, with only two-and-sixpence and a book in his pocket. A typical master-binder, a sturdy figure in his white apron, standing at the binder's-bench, new-style—how different to the old—Harry Benwell proved a good remembrancer. He recalled the days of the small staff and 'thrifty hire,' and the old bindery in Featherstone Court, where a fish-shop dis-

puted the site with the bookbinder's close quarters. The 'Governor' then only had one prentice—himself to wit, a woman and a boy, to help him. Even so it was often hard to find the money for weekly rent and week's wages, for boards and leather and the rest.

"'Mind you,' said Harry Benwell, 'he never really cared for money—not money itself! It was only a means to working out his schemes. He came to London, I believe, with a mind full of schemes from the first, for the spirit was in him—and bound to come out.'

"All the while he was on the alert for new moves. One day he spied a toy-shop to be let in East Road (near City Road) and with the help of a friend, that tailor called Lardner whom he mentions, he took the shop, cleared off the toys, replaced them with books he had bound himself, and set up a workshop in two sheds behind it. That shows the spirit he had, and his instinct for the 'Book Adventurous' and its value to the busy crowd. No doubt he was often impatient, masterful, quick-tempered, and certainly he had no pity for 'wasters.' But if he was angry one moment, he 'made up' the next. He enjoyed his work, and wished his men to enjoy it too. He had the Yorkshireman's love for music, knew the *Messiah* by heart, and would sing solos from it with immense gusto, over the book he was binding. A new hand might wink and stare at so uncommon a master, but his ways, if eccentric, were decisive. Like Simon Eyre, he might say to a new hand, 'Hear ye, friend, have ye any skill in the mystery?' And like Firk in the same play, his foreman saw that there were no shirkers. One seems to be back amid the folk-life of Elizabethan London, in the scenes of this 'Bookbinder's Comedy.' What impressed his workmen most was his driving power, his determined will. He had the ruling impulse, the sense of a purpose, which, spite all hindrances, must be attained. He let nothing come in the way of that purpose. He worked early and late, gave up common pleasures, and refused everything that interfered with his own work. Religious, too, he believed in his journeymen doing as he did, attending chapel, giving up drink, and not sparing the sweat of their brows and labour of their hands.

"Another old workman, Ned Graham, smiled when he recalled the master-binder working at the bench against time. He himself would cut the leather covers with an

expert hand, no machine to help, and unwilling to believe at the day's end that the number of covers was two score less than he had counted. His pleasure when a special book was finished, and well finished, or the pile of bound copies mounted up, was that of the true craftsman. Long afterwards, when the Letchworth works were turning out 'Everyman' volumes by hundreds and thousands, he has been known to exclaim with a sigh over the superior craft of the old hand-bound books. In the Memoir where he tells with pride of the first books he produced as a publisher, in the Temple Library, we hear the accent of the inveterate craftsman. He liked to hear of the printer's pride in a book, as in Caxton's famous preface to Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*. He would have liked every volume he produced to have some individuality, and bear a mark like the famous old folio bible at St. Salvatore, which has Peter Schöffer of Gernsheym's name in the colophon.

"In the first anxious years at Great Eastern Street he had no doubt to be content with all kinds of books, which came to him to be bound. One of his former workers there, Miss Nellie Hume, recalled piles of volumes of *Darkest England*, bound up for the Salvation Army. Another, Miss Kate Campbell, spoke of his delight in the skill of his work-people, or in getting an order through by working overtime. 'But,' said one of them with a sigh, 'I always thought he was never the same man, who used to be so merry at our outings in Epping Forest, and so keen in his affairs, after he lost his two youngest boys in the War.'"

About this time, 1874, when I was twenty-five years of age, I was elected a member of the Shoreditch Vestry by a show of hands at a public meeting. About twenty-four voted for me, and I might well say that it was by a gathering of publicans and sinners. I was nominated by the Temperance Party and worked in their interest. There is more keenness about these elections nowadays, but in my time, even at a poll on my second election, only some two hundred odd voted for me, and I was near the head of the poll. The meetings of the representatives of the people numbering thousands of the poorest class in this great parish

were a strange experience. They were made up of coteries of self-interested members, mainly publicans, jerry-builders and small tradesmen, and disinterested men were few amongst us, though in the Temperance Party and what was called the Social Reform Party there were one or two whose object was unselfish. The election to committees at the opening of the new vestry was evidence of this. For instance, I wondered at first why there was such a strong desire to be on the Parliamentary Committee. Then I discovered that the members were entitled to free passes to all the entertainments given in the town hall, and to many other little privileges that other committeemen did not enjoy.

The Valuation Committee — which of course was one of the most important committees of a vestry— was given over, not to experts in building and valuation, but to those not fortunate enough to have been elected to other committees and to those who had an interest in keeping down the rates on particular properties. I was elected on this committee and our method of procedure was as follows. The committee, cut up into little groups, went to view different properties, either newly built, or with new additions. We walked over and viewed them very casually. Then we adjourned to the nearest public-house and discussed the matter over drinks. The teetotalers had frequently to stand outside and wait till the other members were refreshed, and then we heard their conclusions, and assented or dissented as we thought best. When it drew near to midday there was an adjournment for lunch at the parish expense, and again we went to work with frequent returns to the "house" to consider each property. Before the day was over many of us found it difficult to walk quite steadily, or keep an upright position: and so the interests of the great parish were served.

The work was very interesting, nevertheless, and I soon learnt a good deal as to how the poor lived, and why the publicans and builders were keenly interested in parish matters. I need hardly say that all this is very different in these days, and it is only right to add that much of the improvement in the parish councils and municipalities is owing to the advent of the labour member, who is not so much interested in keeping down the rates as in the betterment of his own class. Many devoted women have also thrown themselves into this work and helped the more humanitarian side of the councils, especially in the direction of child welfare.

In our childhood my father spent but little time with us as business filled nearly all his waking hours, except Sundays and occasional Saturday afternoons. Although very tired physically at week-ends through standing most of the day on one sound leg—the other was slightly lame—still his splendid mental vitality was rarely exhausted, even when he was fighting desperately to keep his head above water, provide for his family and build a business.

But he often talked to us of religious ideals, of the great men who had lived and died to serve humanity. Time and again he endeavoured to interest us in books and literature, and formed for us a little circulating library. Our boy and girl friends joined and we all paid a penny for each book borrowed. At times he would read to us and we preserve vivid recollections of his readings. He had a fine voice and enough dramatic power to make us share something of the emotion raised in him by his subjects from the New Testament, especially the parables, from the Psalms, the Prophets, and from Dickens, including especially the story of Richard Doubledick and *A Christmas Carol*.

For a few years, earlier than I can remember, he was a member of the Albert Hall choir, and greatly enjoyed singing in the Handel, Haydn and Mendelssohn oratorios. His young friend, Ted Strickland, introduced Beethoven's work to my father, who at once felt its power and beauty. He was not a good reader of music, but with the help of

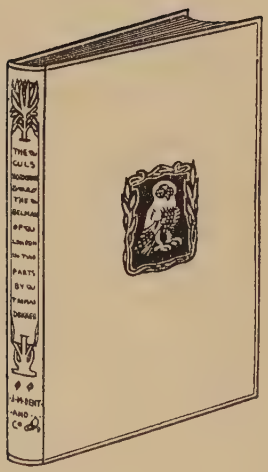
Ted he learnt some Beethoven songs, always a source of joy and a great refreshment to him during times of business and family anxiety.

Owing to his lameness it was difficult for him to take active part in our games, but he wished us to be interested in sports, and took us occasionally to see big cricket matches at Lord's and the Oval. He liked to see us play and, encouraged us in the formation of a minor cricket club. In later years he delighted to watch us in a set of lawn tennis and in spite of his disability he began to play this game after his fiftieth year.

Our Christmas parties were looked forward to more than others by all our friends, largely because he gave much time and thought to the entertainment of our guests. He wrote little plays founded on old fairy tales like Red Riding Hood, and one on the *Christmas Carol*, which he staged and greatly enjoyed. On festal nights he plunged into all the fun and gaiety with that young heart which he kept almost to the last few days of his life. I can see him now in a tableau impersonating Jacob at the well with Rebecca, or playing musical chairs or dumb crambo with all the delight and zest of the happiest child in the party.

In those days he knew nothing of William Morris and the revived interest in old crafts, but he felt instinctively the close relation between the training of hand and eye and the growth of the soul. He learnt something of carpentry in order to teach us, and under his care we made a magic lantern, and acquired a ready control of our hands. Many a time he urged on us that work, if worth doing at all was worth doing well, and that whatever we undertook to do must be done with all our mind and might.

When he came to know the work of Morris and Cobden Sanderson his admiration was at once secured, and he had a strong sympathy with the ideas and ideals at the back of the Arts and Crafts movement. With all his interest in the Crafts it is strange that apparently he never produced any great specimen of bookbinding, which was the trade or craft he had learnt over a period of seven years. But in arranging the binding of his own books most of the designs were based upon ideas which he put before the artists who made the actual drawings.



CHAPTER IV

A Brave Helpmeet—Her Last Days on Earth—A Tragic New Year's Eve—The Fire in the Factory—Beginning Again—Rebuilding and Reshaping—Pear-Tree Court—Toynbee Hall—The Travellers' Club—First Visit to Italy—An Old Dream come True—"The Temple Library"—Lamb to Goldsmith—Beddoes's Works—Augustine Birrell—Herbert Railton—The Eighteenth-century Novelists—Jane Austen—(Notes by the Way).

IN the midst of the terrible struggles for a living my wife began to sicken from a mysterious disease which gave her great pain and baffled the several doctors to whom she went, and the cause was not discovered until she was at death's door. It added cruelly to her suffering to know that she could no longer help me in the struggle, and, as she said, instead of being a help in it all, to become a financial burden. She had been so brave, so entirely self-sacrificing, so determined that all obstacles should be overcome, and now her health failing, the constant harassing fear that we should also fail in business was a torture to her as to me, and when after two years of agony she knew the verdict of the doctors that she was to die, she begged me not to let our boys come into the business but to set them to some other career that would not be a life-long struggle. For we had fought this battle hard for fifteen years and defeat seemed very near. I told her that the two boys, who were old enough to go to work and were respectively fifteen and thirteen years of age, must decide for themselves, and it was arranged that she should speak to them and tell them of her wishes. She did so, but both the lads said they could not think of anything but helping in the fight,

and so she passed away with the fear upon her that not only I but the children with me were doomed to a life-long sordid struggle for a living.

My wife passed away in the November of 1887. She had been the most self-abnegating, self-forgetting creature I have ever known; all her life both body and soul bound up in her husband and children; pure in heart, absolutely without guile, brave and strong in all suffering she had to bear herself, but almost fainting at the suffering of others, quick of intellect, with a wonderful spiritual insight, it seemed terrible that she should pass out of life in dread fear for those she had striven for with all her faculties and with all her soul.

On the New Year's Eve of 1888 I sat wondering what the new year would bring me of worry, and how I should get on with my young family, or if I should be able to pull through the coming year without failing in business. It was just past twelve o'clock and the new year was born when there was a ring at the door, and a young man who knew me came with the news that my factory was on fire and they feared they could save very little of it. I at once went down with him, my heart nearly breaking to think that all the result of the fifteen years' struggle of my dear wife and I was to be wasted in flames. Truly it was not the loss of the money I thought of at that moment, but I feared that all the spiritual force and energy spent might be absolutely futile, and years of painful sacrifice all in vain. I passionately rebelled at this and became almost desperate, for all seemed hopeless. The revulsion came; of course I thought of the children and my responsibility to those who had helped me, and braced myself for another big fight.

The insurance money was just sufficient to pay off all my capital debt, but left me nothing to begin life anew, except what I had saved from the fire. Now

my friend Mr. Carter proved most true and kind. When I told him the money from the insurance would pay off all I owed, and that as soon as I received it I could repay him the money he had lent me—money I am convinced he had hardly hoped to see again if I continued in business as before—he said, "What! and leave you to begin life again without capital—not me; get to work and draw upon the insurance money as you want it, and I will stand by you." I was greatly heartened and set to work with a will, and, strangely enough, this was the turning-point in my business life, for I never went back afterwards.

My father's first care was to reassure his larger creditors, mostly publishers, and his landlord. I was on Christmas holiday from school, and father took me round in a hansom-cab to see his creditors, who I remember were sympathetic and helpful. The day following the fire we received a solicitor's letter offering to sell premises at 1-4 Pear Tree Court, Farringdon Road, and the plant and business of bookbinders—Messrs Stoneham's. Terms of purchase were quickly arranged, and two or three days after the fire most of our people were at work again to the relief of my father's business mind and to the satisfaction of his kindly heart. In a dark dirty building in a narrow back street the business was re-started. His old friend, George Carter, re-advanced the purchase-money paid for Stoneham's business and financed the weekly wage bills until the disorganisation caused by the fire was overcome. The Stoneham machinery was moved into the new building at 69 Great Eastern Street in the following July, and three months later my father published his first two books in the Temple Library—Lamb's *Essays of Elia,* and *Last Essays of Elia.* A fine record of energy and courage!

I had long been a member and worker at Toynbee Hall, and let me say here how much I owe that institution and its founder, Canon Barnett, and the many friends I found there.

I had first heard of it in 1886 or 1887—I think the latter year—and I should like to tell how I came to know the place, and why it attracted me. As I have previously explained, I came of strong old nonconformist stock, and had worked for various chapels in many little offices, mixing with the parsons and other office bearers closely and intimately. My years of experience in this work brought me into contact with many pure-souled men and women—yet as a whole I found the churches I knew, both in mind and spirit, narrow, bigoted, uncultured and illiberal. They had, of course, their notions of philanthropy and betterment of the people, and they also had doles of charity for their members. All these things were good, but one could not help feeling that most things they did were to save, as they thought, their own souls, to have a savings-bank as it were, in the next world. I hope this is not an uncharitable view of the case, for indeed I met saints among them.

Especially do I remember vividly an old lady—whose name was Mrs. Stevens—who went to a Methodist class meeting I occasionally attended, and seemed to come into the place with a halo about her. She was a simple working woman, but we knew that some miracle had happened for she was always in joy, and one felt that it was a pure joy coming from communion with Christ and God. Somehow I knew that this woman had arrived at a state of pure happiness, with her heart full of tenderness, and her joy in a living faith was wonderful to see. To me she stood out, an instance of perfect salvation, though I do not know whether she ever needed salving at all. She endured all kinds of bodily troubles, yet these had no power to quench her spiritual joy—but this is a digression.

I heard of Toynbee Hall first from my old friend Hosgood, who was then living in the newly built

69 Great Eastern Street

Wadham House. I went to supper in his rooms and found an atmosphere which seemed exactly to fulfil the desire of my mind. Here were men who made no pretence of particular religion, but who had been at universities and had every opportunity for cultured thought, and came here to be in touch with workers and to offer the results of their culture in exchange for intimacy with the life of workers—a comradeship, in fact, between high and low, as we call it, was the chief aim of the settlement, at least so it seemed to me, and at that time they were there with earnest purpose. There was no teaching of religious dogma, there was no special religious atmosphere — from the church point of view—about the place, though Canon Barnett, who was warden, lived in the vicarage close by and administered St. Jude's church which was closely in touch with Toynbee, but it was made perfectly clear to those who came to the settlement that they were there for *service*, not only to the people whom they had come to serve, but to their own minds and hearts. It was a part of that service to discover the best way to help the workers to a wider outlook, both spiritual and intellectual.

I received their teaching gladly and gave what ready service I could, though I am bound to say that it never was what it might have been, even with my very limited opportunities, and I must confess, alas! that I went there to get rather than to give, for I had so much need of getting. Up to that time my life had been sordid —my struggle for existence had been severe, and I fear my eyes had been closed to the way out; still, I did what I could and enjoyed what I did. I was elected to the Education Committee and as secretary of the Shakespeare Society, which I am afraid I should never have filled properly but for the help of my old friend Martin, who worked with me in my office. As part

of the educational work of the association I urged music, and told Canon Barnett what a sad thing it was on Sunday to see people marching down Whitechapel in solid crowds, aimless and helpless for their own development or helpful amusement, and suggested that if he would allow me I would attempt to establish a Sunday afternoon musical concert suitable for such a day, yet not confined to what is called religious music. He was rather dubious, but consented to let me try for a month, and that month, I am glad to say, extended to thirty years. The first concerts I attempted were by slenderly trained amateurs, but even the first effort was crowned with success for people came at once, and later I was able to interest a lady—Mrs. Aves—the wife of one of our most beloved workers, and she brought highly cultured singers and players, and the hall became packed and the court outside full of listening people. Indeed the appreciation was marvellous, for these people of Whitechapel knew good music, but it was difficult to find whence they got their knowledge. I presume the explanation is that many of them were Russians and Jews, and had more experience of real music than we English people. Whatever the origin, the promoter of the Bach Society came down and gave a concert, and said it was a joy to come because they never were so appreciated elsewhere. This work took root, and without help of mine after the first few years, it has been carried on with steady proficiency and is still very much appreciated in the neighbourhood.

Following this success I arranged lectures on Sunday nights by Deans on their Cathedrals, and these, too, proved successful, though it was a much more difficult task. Still the rooms were filled and it became evident that it only needed efforts to provide access to a more intellectual life on a day of leisure like Sunday, in order

to secure large audiences including Jews, not always idle on Sundays, and living in the neighbourhood.

The work I loved most was the Shakespeare Society. Here we had a very intelligent company of people who met year in year out to read the plays. We were fortunate in having for presidents some exceedingly enthusiastic scholars who have since become distinguished in literature. Sir Sidney Lee was really the founder, and was followed by E. K. Chambers and Gregory Foster (now Sir Gregory), but perhaps the most delightful and sympathetic of all was the Rev. Ronald Bayne, who had taken up the work of Canon Barnett at St. Jude's Church. I followed him and had the honour of being the society's president for some years. We discussed the plays with great avidity, reading a scene and then discussing each item so that when we had read a play through we really did know something about it; and we did not only argue about philological items and little differences in the readings and so on, but we discussed the living spirit of the play and every character was criticised as a live man. These meetings were a real joy to us and it was a great pleasure to me to have a meeting in my garden at Hill Lodge, Enfield, where in a reading of *As You Like It* some of the original members of the society took part.

I intended to give help to others, but I got a far greater benefit out of this work myself, and I owe to the Toynbee Settlement more than I can ever repay.

In 1888 the Travellers' Club, founded in the previous year, arranged its first journey to Florence to be carried out on co-operative principles. I was worn out physically with the reconstruction of my business, and as I was able to have my wife's sister at home, in desperation I took the opportunity to travel, and so began to

widen my vision of the world and to develop any sense of the beautiful I had in me.

I can never make anyone understand what the revelation of this wondrous old world meant to me. Here was a city built before industrialism had destroyed the spirit of beauty, where man had lived by something other than money-making, luxury and power. A city of flowers, indeed, and a city beautified by men's handicraft.

Try and imagine what it was to come out of the East End of London (I had no knowledge of the West at that time, nor have I had much since) with its sordid grime, to cross the Alps in glorious sunshine with every mountain pinnacle draped in robes of crystalline snow, shining in light divine, with rushing waterfalls and spring tenderness adorning the hills and the borders of sapphire lakes. Oh! glory upon glories! those first great days of travel. I had literally been lifted into a heaven beyond my dreams, indeed my whole being had been transformed. Remember that I had come out of years of sordid struggle for a living, with hardly time to lift my eyes to the dull grey skies of the weary toilsome streets, of all the suffering and almost hopeless fight for dear life, and suddenly was lifted up and carried by a magic carpet into a wealth of beauty and wonder not to be surpassed in all the world. My blessing for ever be with the men who first conceived the idea and made it possible for the toiler to get away from humdrum life into a new heaven and a new earth—if only for three weeks—and brought this within the means of the hard-working elementary schoolmaster and mistress, the clerk and the working man; for the cost of that three weeks of glorious life, including every expense (even tips and coach fares), was only some £13 or £14. And, mind you, we travelled in real comfort. We owed all this to my friends Bolton King and Thomas

Okey, who conceived the idea and carried it out completely without the aid of travel agents. They were their own couriers and men of business, and continued for many years to give joy to hundreds of over-worked men and women. May all benisons from a hundred grateful hearts be upon them now and for ever! I had the joy of going to Florence many years after this and I came to love her with all my heart.

And I came home from this journey a new man. It seemed to send the years of suffering far back into the past, and I started a renewed life with renewed hope and my mind alive with new ideas.

I had during 1886 and 1887 been dreaming of publishing—only a renewed dream of my boyhood. Some years before I had compiled, with the help of my wife, one or two birthday books and others, and I had published them with an idea of selling them in my leather bindings. But after the fire in 1888 I began to think of serious publishing, helped on by the suggestions of Mr. F. J. Simmons who was in my employ as a traveller, and who was a real lover of books. He became my friend and I owed very much to his help.

The idea of the format of the series I began with was very little of my own, but was reminiscent of a series published by Kegan Paul called "The Parchment Library." I was, however, not conscious of this; probably the real suggestion came from the printers, The Chiswick Press, who submitted sample pages, and who I believe printed some volumes of The Parchment Library. However that may be, I know that infinite pains were taken with every detail, and we were fortunate enough to secure for our first editor Mr. Augustine Birrell, then a hard-working barrister who had just issued his *Obiter Dicta*, which charms us to this day. The series was named "The Temple Library," the title being chosen because our first two authors, Lamb and

Goldsmith, had lived in the Temple. The first books were Lamb's *Essays of Elia* and *Last Essays*, with drawings by Herbert Railton. The venture proved a success and I was greatly heartened by a kindly word from the great bookseller Quaritch, who when he saw the books said that if this was the first production of our house, the public would soon want to hear more of us, and that it was the best piece of book-making he had seen for many a year, or words to that effect.

We went on from Lamb to Goldsmith—kindred spirits—and by good chance we secured Austin Dobson to edit the poems and plays; then Johnson's *Essays* and Landor's *Pericles and Aspasia*, Leigh Hunt's *Poems and Essays* were added. Later—in 1891—we were fortunate in being able to include the works of Beddoes edited by Edmund Gosse.[1] They were all printed in limited editions on hand-made paper, and I am still very proud of their production. All these were fairly successful, but more than that, they brought my name before the public and even carried it to America, whence I soon had inquiries for editions which were already taken by Messrs. Macmillan. We next ventured on a series of the eighteenth-century novelists, beginning with Fielding and ending with Jane Austen. These proving moderately successful I was fairly launched as a publisher.

In about 1889 the old firm of Messrs. Suttaby and Co. Ltd. failed. They were publishers of devotional books and wholesale booksellers of books bound by themselves in leather. My father purchased their business and amongst the copyrights were some devotional books he decided to

[1] Here my father was helped by his friend Mr. F. H. Evans, who not only suggested the reissue of Beddoes's works in the Temple Library but also corresponded and arranged matters with Edmund Gosse, lending his first editions for editorial purposes. All the volumes have been out of print for many years.

reprint, and he naturally applied to the printers of the earlier editions. These were Messrs. Turnbull and Spears of Edinburgh, and thus began the most pleasant business relationship which exists even to-day between printer and publisher. Mr. George Turnbull and his father became personal and business friends of my father, and in the preparation and production of such works as The Temple Shakespeare and the Beardsley *Morte d'Arthur* they gave, in addition to admirable professional service, a personal and friendly interest above price, which we were delighted to accept.

LE MORTE
D'ARTHUR
SIR THOMAS
MALLORY Knt
J.M. DENT & Co
ALDINE HOUSE
MDCCCCIX

CHAPTER V

Family Cares—Need of Companionship—The Woman's Part—A True Testimony—The Toynbee Travellers—We go to Italy—Siena and the Mediaeval Towns Series—The Personality of Cities—First Longer Sea-voyage—S.S. *Teutonic*—New York in 1893—American Impressions—A Rare Bookseller (Frederick H. Evans)—His Idea of a Pocket Shakespeare—Planning the Work—Mr. (now Sir) Israel Gollancz—Walter Crane—(Editor's Notes and Comments).

MEANWHILE I was struggling with my young family at home. My wife's sister had given up her work to be with her sister during her illness, and she stayed in her usual unselfish way to help me with the children and keep our home together. Although I was gradually gaining new hope and putting the past struggle behind me, I felt the need of companionship and help with my family. I found it in one younger than myself who consented to become my wife and to shoulder the task of my household with its three boys and one girl. She did so with all her heart, putting things into good shape, comforting and helping us, and she has been the light and sunshine of the house ever since. I had not to go far to seek her, for her parents with their three daughters had taken part of our large house and I came to know them through her mother helping me when I was ill and my sister away from home; indeed she seemed to be sent to bring me good cheer and happiness, for, since the day when I first knew her, though we have lost some of our dear ones and have had to bear the sorrows that are the common lot of all humanity, her cheerfulness and faithfulness have never failed. My work has prospered and we have lived a full and happy life

together. As these lines may be read by my children and those who have known us as friends, I wish here to bear my testimony to her goodness, her never-failing courage, and to her faithful, loving kindness to the children who were not hers.

In 1890, the first year of our married life, we were able to go to Italy with the Toynbee Travellers' Club, and visited Siena and Florence. It was on this holiday when in Siena that the idea of the Mediaeval Towns Series came to me, and in the production and publication of these volumes I found great interest. It gave me opportunities to visit Italy and other countries in search of authors and material. A new interest grew up in my life through my travels to the different cities which were proposed and considered for this series. I began to feel that these cities of the old times were small nations in themselves, especially in Italy, and the towns began to show a clear personality of their own and to stand out distinctively as living egos, if I might put it so. For example take Siena and Florence; even to-day their characteristics are clearly defined —their types of men are different, their architecture distinctive, the manners and customs of the two cities have their own idiosyncrasies. It is the same with Verona, Venice, Padua, Pisa, Genoa and many cities of other countries, though perhaps not to the same degree. Again, contrast Dresden, Munich, Nuremberg, and Mayence, you will find distinctive individuality in each.

In producing this series of books on the old European cities it was one of my chief desires to help in the revelation of these different "personalities," and in arranging with the authors of the different volumes I urged that they should attempt to unveil in their stories as much as possible of the distinctive individuality to be found in those wonderful mediaeval towns.

In January 1893 I paid my first visit to America, sailing on the S.S. *Teutonic*, at that time one of the great liners. It was my first sea voyage of considerable length and was a time of great misery to me, the passage being rough, and I was very sick through the whole of the voyage; but I was fully compensated by the hearty welcome I received from my American publishing friends. I was met at the dock by representatives of two rival firms who were anxious to see what the new star in the publishing firmament had to offer them, so from the time I landed to the day when I returned to England some three weeks later I was at work every hour of the day. It was a wonderfully exciting experience and inspired me to do and give my utmost. My time was spent in New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago, and I returned to New York via Toronto after visiting Niagara in the middle of winter. The river was frozen over and the massive blocks of green ice clanked down the great falls like blows on Vulcan's anvil.

Since this first visit to America I have seen great changes in the cities I have visited, especially in New York and Chicago. New York streets in January 1893 were simply impassable for those who were not used to them. In all of them snow was allowed to accumulate, and slush was six or seven inches deep. The ruts were worse than one would find in a country lane, and were very dangerous. The trams ran on lines frequently sticking up considerably above the roadway, and being hidden by mud at night-time they were almost death-traps. The clanging of the cars, the noisy terrors of the overhead railway and the general squalor of the streets made outdoor life a nerve-wracking experience. The tramcars were heated with stoves, and the contrast was very great between the cold yet damp atmosphere, which compelled you to wear

heavy clothing, and the dry heat of the interior of the cars, was almost stifling. I remember going into a publisher's office and forgetting to take off my heavy overcoat, with the result that after talking a little time I found myself swooning from the heat.

The streets, mostly wide and open, were carelessly built and wore a sordid commercial air without much attempt at individuality or beauty. The police regulations were a scandal, indeed it was difficult to find a policeman—this at any rate was my experience. I need scarcely say that a marvellous change has been effected. I know no streets now in any country I have visited that are better regulated and in the more important thoroughfares better tended. The architecture in Fifth Avenue, Broadway and other great streets has become almost palatial and sometimes beautiful, while the great sky-scrapers which limited space has made necessary are often imposing and expressive of the power and imaginative force of a new nation.

The same might be said of Chicago which was rebuilt as if by a miracle after the appalling fire. It is in many respects a model city, with wide and open roads, its buildings distinctive, its streets well-regulated, and every sanitary care taken of the people, whilst its pig-sticking industry is relegated to the suburbs. When I first visited it the deaths by street accidents were much more frequent than now, and hustling money-making at any cost appeared to be the great characteristic of the city in the past, with a seeming callousness to anything else. The transformation in this respect is one of the greatest wonders in my experience. Its large university, its wonderful system of libraries, the great work done at university settlements under Miss Jane Addams (who, by the by, obtained her inspiration from Toynbee Hall), the eagerness for education in every

direction, is one of the greatest encouragements to human effort that I am aware of throughout the world. But more of America and its cities anon. I returned home with many valuable commissions in my pocket, —in those days a tremendous thing for me—and I am indebted to America for a great deal of appreciation and encouragement.

In 1893 the idea came to me through my friend Mr. Frederick H. Evans—then a bookseller in Queen Street, Cheapside—that there was a great want of a pocket edition of Shakespeare with a single play in each volume. At the time there was nothing scholarly of the kind published, indeed I do not think anyone had attempted a *complete* edition of Shakespeare in this form.

As secretary of the Toynbee Shakespeare Society I keenly felt the want of such an edition, for members read aloud in class each scene and commented thereon before turning to the next. It was amusing to see the texts brought to our readings—second-hand editions, quartos, Bowdlerised school editions—no two being the same and all without proper machinery for elucidating difficulties. Neither types nor pages gave proper help to reading aloud.

When my friend told me of the urgent public inquiries for an edition to meet the need of the ordinary reader and of those who wanted to study the plays in detail, the idea filled me with enthusiasm and I set to work directly. In the first instance I wrote to Mr. (Sir) Sidney Lee, who afterwards was the first President of the Toynbee Shakespeare Society, describing exactly my idea about the editorial matter. I wanted neither commentary nor personal impressions of a play, but only direct notes on data and dubious readings with some variorum work and a simple glossary of obsolete words, etc. Sidney Lee was compelled to decline, and then I wrote to the late Dean Beeching and he also

declined, principally because he could not be bound by my conditions. I also wrote to one or two other scholars who declined the task. I then mentioned what I had done to Mr. Israel Gollancz, who had edited for me in the Temple Library Charles Lamb's *Specimens of the Elizabethan Dramatists*, and who was then my friend. At once he offered to undertake the work with the help of his sister on my conditions.

With utmost pains I planned a special format. It should be printed on the best paper, shaped to require no turned lines, and finally it should be as far as I could make it a thing of beauty. All this was to be done and I must be able to sell at one shilling per volume. I discussed every detail with my friends Evans and Simmons, worked out the cost to the uttermost farthing as I thought, and we found it could be done. Every detail had its purpose: e.g. the red rubric of the act and scene printed at the head of each page, and the numbering of the lines was to aid in quick references when reading or discussing the play in a class. The paper was in the first instance a Dutch hand-made paper; later, owing to the difficulty of getting a sufficient supply from Holland, we were compelled to make it in England. Mr. Gollancz proposed that we should use the fly-leaf between the frontispiece and the title-page for a eulogy of Shakespeare by one of his contemporaries or by a modern author, and print on the back of the title-page itself some short critique of the particular play. I persuaded Walter Crane to draw the emblematic title-pages. For frontispieces we reproduced portraits, or had etchings made of scenes that were in some way connected with Shakespeare. By the kind permission of Aldis Wright and his publishers, Messrs. Macmillan and Co., the Cambridge text was used. The first volume, *The Tempest*, was issued, I think, in January 1894, and the whole series of forty volumes

concluding with the *Sonnets* was completed by October 1896. All the books were printed by my friend George Turnbull, who entered into the spirit of the enterprise and took infinite care to carry out my wishes. The idea caught on and was instantly a success, so that for some time the sales each year reached 250,000 volumes, the largest sale made in Shakespeare since the plays were written. No piece of work has ever given me so much satisfaction, and the reader must therefore forgive my exuberance. One other joy it gave me that I must record.

When we came to consider the *Sonnets*, the last volume to be set, the editor and I wished to have for the frontispiece some emblematic idea of Shakespeare's genius, something in the nature of Michael Angelo's "Moses" or "David" that would symbolise his greatness. So keen was I about it that I wrote to Mr. G. F. Watts putting the idea before him. His reply was very encouraging and he asked me to go and see him, when he told me he had long since given up working on commissions and only painted from his own conceptions. Therefore he could not do what I wished, but if I looked through a folio album of his sketches I might find something that would do. There I came across the first sketch of "Love Triumphant," the third in the trilogy of "Love and Life," "Love and Death" and "Love Triumphant." I asked Mr. Watts to tell me the meaning of the picture, and he said it was his explanation of life and its purpose. Life struggling up cruel rocks with bleeding feet, forgetting its pain and learning to love because of the joy in being first loved, loving on even to cruel sacrifice and then death, and at last love becomes triumphant over both the agonies of life and death and ascends into the complete fullness of love. Still, I said, if that does not characterise the genius of Shakespeare it does the spirit

of the *Sonnets*, and begged him to let me use it. With his perfect graciousness he lent me the precious sketch in order to make the plate direct from the original. This was not the only great kindness he showed me. Many times he came to my office to see what promise there was in the young artists who were then about me, and I remember on one occasion a drawing on the mantel-shelf illustrating one of our books which attracted his attention. Eagerly he asked particulars of the young artist and told me that I must bring him down to lunch at Limnerslease, which I was not slow to do. We had a wonderful talk, and the master drew the young fellow into the garden where stood his great statue "Energy," and walked him up and down. I shall not soon forget the almost youthful energy of the octogenarian, beside his lanky, somewhat stilted young companion, as they paced the garden path. The old artist was urging the young man not to paint his conceptions for commissions or money; if money was necessary, paint portraits or something utilitarian and give himself up to speaking to the world by his art of beauty and ideals. He did not seem to enthuse the young fellow, for when we went away and were walking home his only remark about the interview was to ask me if I did not think old Watts was a bit senile? The last I heard of this young artist was that he had attained high honours in becoming the art editor of a popular magazine. Perhaps no other comment is necessary.

There is one incident in my father's career which is such a definite piece of publishing history that I am surprised it is not noted in his Memoirs. When he began to publish in 1888 the booksellers, through stupid and unfair competition, had reached the stage of giving to the public a discount of twenty-five per cent off the advertised published prices of books, and as some kind of protest against such a system of throat-cutting competition a few books had been issued

J. M. Dent

From a photograph by Frederick Hollyer

at net prices, but nothing had been done by booksellers or publishers to ensure the books being sold at not less than the net prices. In 1890 Sir Frederick Macmillan decided to try his scheme of publishing some books at net prices in spite of the general opinion among booksellers being adverse, and although certain booksellers were hostile yet he continued each year to publish a steadily increasing number, and many other publishers followed him. My father, although a free-trader, supported the scheme by word and by issuing all his books at net prices.

Up to 1893 practically all his ventures met with moderate success, but were not sufficiently popular for the "cutting" booksellers to take enough interest in them to "cut" the price. But when The Temple Shakespeare appeared, in February 1894, and at once jumped into public favour, the original firm of Messrs. Stoneham (later succeeded by the present F. and E. Stoneham Ltd.), who were one of the chief offenders in the cutting of prices, began to sell the 1s. 6d. edition of Shakespeare at 1s. 4d. As we did not sell direct to Messrs. Stoneham we had to protest to Messrs. Simpkin, Marshall and Co., the great wholesale booksellers, who supplied them with our publications. Messrs. Simpkin reported that Stoneham refused to sell at the net published price. My father then told Messrs. Simpkin that we could not continue to supply them with our books unless they contracted not to sell them to Stoneham until he agreed to sell at the net published price. That was a very bold attitude for such a young publisher to take towards his largest customer—the great and old-established house of Messrs. Simpkin. But I am sure they were in sympathy with the net book system, and after a few days consideration they posted a notice on 3 May at their counter that Stoneham was not to be supplied with any of Dent's publications. Then Stoneham tried to get the books through other channels, but the attempt gave him too much trouble and cost too much money, so they relinquished the struggle and agreed to sell our books at the proper prices. Messrs. Macmillan made a similar arrangement with Messrs. Simpkin a month or two later.

This practical example showed booksellers and publishers that it was possible to prevent books being sold below the published prices, and paved the way for the Net Book Agreement between publishers and booksellers which was

arranged in 1899, largely through the efforts of Sir Frederick Macmillan. It has been kept loyally by both sides, and has been of great benefit to the book trade, without in any way raising the prices of books to the public, who are amply protected by keen competition between the publishers.[1]

[1] For an account of "The Net Agreement," see *The Net Book Agreement*, 1899, and *The Book War*, 1906–8, by Sir Frederick Macmillan (1924).

CHAPTER VI

Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*—My Bookseller Friend—What a Good Bookshop should be—Aubrey Beardsley—We hold a Picture-Show—Our Work widens—Family Affairs—Children and Child Nature—The Little Ego—The Babe's Suffering—W. H. Hudson's Ideas—New Schemes—The Temple Classics.

ON my return from America, among other schemes, we had thought of producing Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* in such a form as would appeal to the general reader, and we hoped to obtain decorations in keeping with the mediaeval spirit of the book. But at first it proved very difficult to find the right artist. I had already used the work of several young men beginning their careers, but found none with sufficient originality and feeling for harmonious design.

Mr. F. H. Evans—who had been introduced to me by Mr. Simmons, and to whom I owe much intellectual pleasure and more help than I can ever repay—had a bookseller's shop in Queen Street, Cheapside, which became what every bookshop should be, a centre around which book-lovers congregated and discussed with its proprietor new books and new ideas in literature. Evans was a bookseller because he *loved* books and *knew* them. His bibliographical knowledge of the selling value of books was unique, but he was also a close student of the literature he cared for, and had a keen instinct for the best. He knew and loved Meredith's work when Meredith was a drug in the book-market, and was an early admirer of Browning. To many delightful by-ways of literature he introduced me and helped me to appreciate. Indeed my friend

Evans was a most distinctive character. He was systematic and accurate in business affairs, skilful with his fingers, though they were never intended to be an artist's. He played the piano with difficulty, though he was heart and soul a musician. He could not paint, but he had the feeling of an artist, and expressed it in some wonderful photography. Though not a man of means he yet managed to get what he set his mind upon. His rooms were full of rare first editions, beautiful Japanese prints, and though he could not buy old masters or high-priced modern pictures he had on his walls choice drawings by Laurence Housman and William Hyde.

All this by the way. Evans asked me to call at the shop to look at some drawings by a young man whom he thought might be good enough for the *Morte d'Arthur*. As he could only keep them for a day I went at once, and although I could not immediately assess the potentialities of the work, yet I instinctively felt that here was a new breath of life in English black-and-white drawing. Its chief feature was a wonderful balance in black and white, giving force and concentration as well as a sense of colour. Its value as decorative art was at once apparent. The young artist, Aubrey Beardsley, was then barely nineteen years of age, and when I saw him I was shocked at his emaciated appearance. Alas! even at that time it was evident that without great care he could not be long for this world. He was a strange boy, "weird" is the right description. He had steeped himself in early nineteenth-century French literature, especially Balzac, and had studied the *Comédie Humaine*, and life had already in a way become *blasé*. Still he was keen about his art and about the commission to decorate Malory's book. It was soon arranged that he should prepare a first drawing for approval, and in a few weeks he

produced a picture which in my poor judgment will always remain a masterpiece, "The Achieving of the Sangreal," a marvellous design of which I am still the proud possessor. The book was a joy to produce. The printing was most carefully done by my friend Turnbull, while Simmons helped me throughout in the manipulation of the book, which was issued monthly during 1893 and 1894 in 2s. 6d. parts, and there was also printed a Large Paper edition on Dutch hand-made paper which was subscribed for at once and has long been difficult to procure. The book startled the critics considerably, but though much adverse criticism came from the "orthodox," Joseph Pennell at once realised the new "value" of its art and praised the work to excess, and Beardsley was soon imitated by many young artists of the time. They "discovered" that "colour" and "balance" in black and white which has ever since been a feature of modern work.

Of Beardsley's subsequent work it is not for me to speak. There crept into it something I cannot describe, but to me it had a taint of evil which in spite of infinite cleverness and considerable advance in technique made it at times repugnant to me. It seemed as though he must have been subject to a baneful influence, and one was heart-broken to feel that such talent, such artistry, should be devoted to unseemly and hurtful work. Alas! the years of his artistic life were but five or six, for he died, I believe, when he was only twenty-five, and in his last year he entered the Roman Catholic Church. A pathetic letter from his mother to me made me feel that in the last year of his suffering the true meaning of beauty came back to him, and that had he lived we might have had great joy in his work.

The completion of the *Morte d'Arthur* made us think that there would be a large enough public interest in Beardsley's work, and that of other young artists who

had come to us, to warrant an exhibition of black-and-white drawings made for our publications, especially as we had the opportunity of hiring the Institute of Water-Colour Painters' Rooms in Piccadilly for a few weeks in September and October 1894, and we decided to attempt it. There were drawings by several men whose work was exceedingly interesting and whose names are now well known. Among others were J. D. Batten, R. Anning Bell, Arthur Rackham, Walter Crane, etc., but some did not fulfil the promise of the work there exhibited.

The exhibition created a great deal of interest and drew public attention to our work, so that we received many suggestions for books and a considerable addition to our business.

"It must have been about this time"—writes the editor of Everyman's Library—"that my acquaintance with Mr. Dent began. He came one evening to the rooms in Gray's Inn, or near it, of Edward Garnett, that rare discoverer of men and books, and a talk about Elia and the Temple Library led to a further meeting. Standing by the side of the tall long-limbed figure of Edward Garnett, he looked quite a small man; and he was noticeably lame (from an accident in his boyhood). But his rosy full-bearded face wore a look of eager avidity, which at once marked him out, and his head was well modelled. A word, a quip, a question of Falstaff's life, or of Caxton's "Nine worthies of the universal world," was enough to set him talking of some new scheme—book or series—to take the market.

"One thing, unlike most of the London publishers' houses, to be noticed at his Great Eastern Street quarters, was the downright working character — workshop and offices combined—of the place. There, packing-cases confronted author's MSS., and the congenial bustle of the bindery was to be heard overhead. In such a setting this new publisher appeared as a genuine working book-producer, who tested every sheet of paper, piece of leather, and fount of type, with a practised hand and eye. He was well in the picture there, and if one put words into his mouth, they might be

Simon Eyre's (adapted)—'As I am a true follower of the craft, bring me ideas, and I'll find ye books these seven years.'

"The first project I took him, was one for a series of Lyric Poets—pocketable little books that should contain only the best of their lyric kind. He set about planning it with a zest that greatly took one's fancy. It was not a distinct market success: the print was too small, and the pale blue and gold binding too pretty for common use. However, it put the finest English lyric verse into its volumes: Burns, Wordsworth, Shelley, Campion and other poets. The opening volume was *The Prelude to Poetry* —a collection of the poets' essays and 'Apologies,' relating to their own craft. The mixed trouble and pleasure taken by J.M.D. in his wares, often led us into hot discussion.

"'Are you right to call sonnets, lyrics?' he once asked.

"'Yes, a sonnet is a lyric carved in marble, but it rings true.'

"'True enough, I dare say. But which is nearest the mark,—the Shakespeare sonnet or the Milton?'

"'Both are near enough. Shakespeare's—

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes

—and Wordsworth's "Westminster Bridge" sonnet.'

"'Ah,' he said, 'I'd like to drive over Westminster Bridge some summer morning at dawn.'

"That brought back reality—the office table, proofs and title-pages—and, alas! bills.

"The story would not be real if it left out the other difficulty—"mutinous money"—as the Paduan called it. It was often a sharp pull for him to meet his wages-bill and to get his accounts to meet. By temperament he was a compound of the sanguine and the cautious, trained in a hard school to consider every penny. This need was so driven into him in his first flurried years, that it affected him to the end. On the first blush, he was inclined to be too sanguine over a book or a project, and second thoughts led to a new reckoning, and a revision which must not be called in question.

"An artist in his ideas, he had some of the weakness of the artistic temperament, along with his Yorkshire shrewdness and early thrift. He felt he ought to be indulged as a

purveyor of wisdom, and literature its vehicle, in a difficult world. This being so, he expected those who worked with him to understand his difficulties, and yield to his will. Indeed his enterprise needed in those anxious years a deal of 'propugnation,'—a word he would have used (vide *Troilus and Cressida*). Hampered by want of working capital, he often had ado to make his books balance. More than one page of his Memoirs shows the keenness and constant anxiety of the indomitable fight he put up. No doubt that increased his growing determination to have his own way, and convert everything into his own ammunition. This applies particularly to matters of expediency or to actual practical decision, where he had his past experience to guide him. When it was a matter of choice in literature, he was more amenable, as indeed he was always avid to learn. His eyes would widen, his lips open, his whole visage grow suffused with hot colour, when a poem was discovered to his gaze. So it was one day over the poem, 'Christi's Kirk on the Green'—new to him:

Was never in Scotland heard nor seen,
Sic dancing nor deray,
Nouthir at Falkland on the Green,
Nor Peeblis at the Play,—
As was of wooers, as I ween,
At Christi's Kirk on ane day.

"Then he would lament the wasted early years when he might have learnt to be a writer, too. He had a shrewd hunger for learning and in his desire, figured literature as a promised land, a wonderful new country, not a too familiar mapped-out region. To enter into it freely at last, and to make it free to others, handicapped at the start as he had been, was one of the prime motives in all his enterprises—his Temple Shakespeare, Temple Classics, Mediaeval Towns Series, and a few years later—Everyman's Library."

Meanwhile the years of my second marriage had gone very happily, and little children once more had come about me, giving stimulus to my work and new outlook for the future. The only shadow that came over me at this period of my life was the need of sending my

eldest son, George, at the age of twenty to exile, owing to haemorrhage of the lungs. It was a cruel parting, and has ever been a disappointment. However, it saved his life and gave him a new opening, for he entered the Anglican Church in New Zealand, and has been a hard-working vicar all the years since. My second son, Hugh, took his place with me in the business and became my right hand in administrative work, and here let me say that but for his loyalty and eager acceptance of continuous hard work I should never have been able to accomplish the task I had set myself. He early developed a capacity for detail in which so far as administration was concerned I was entirely lacking, and his forethought saved me from many a difficulty and distress.

One thing troubled me in these years not a little. It was that I could not, somehow, get the same intimacy with my younger boys and girls that I had had with their elder brothers and sister. Whether it was that I had become overwhelmingly, even passionately, engaged in my publishing, and had not given the same time to them in their babyhood, or whether it was because I was older and not so adaptable, I found it harder to obtain their instinctive sympathy and to get into touch with them as I had done with their elders. They were constantly in my thoughts and I was always planning their future, hoping that I might give them a higher education than I had been able to give their elders, and that their childhood should be more ideal—yet, somehow, I could not become one with them as I desired. Was it because the suffering and anxiety were missing that were continuously with us in the old days? I remember very vividly the loss of my first baby girl and how bitterly I resented it in my soul. What agony it was to see her suffering, how we watched over her hour by hour, and how when we hoped the danger was

past the little soul refused to stay with us, having had, as it seemed, enough of the torture of this world. I still rebel at the suffering and pain of that first loss as, indeed, when later we had to part with her little brother dying in struggle and pain. For they were full of merry life even in their infancy. I have sympathy with and some understanding of the mystery of pain; I can claim death as a brother who opens doors for us, but the pain and suffering and death of little children is to me a mystery against which I for ever rebel.

The two boys that had come to me soon developed very different characteristics. The elder, Paxton (named after my old friend Paxton Hood), had a somewhat slow-thinking, concrete sort of mind, and to him everything seemed very real and important. His younger brother from his very babyhood seemed to regard life as a huge joke to be constantly enjoyed. You wanted to laugh even when you only caught sight of him—he seemed to escape any idea of discipline or order, and rollicked about as if he were playing in a delightful masque that should always be changing its scenery but was never ending, and he carried much of this into boyhood and young manhood, so that he was always the provoker of laughter in our household until the last. How to account for these two widely different natures, and indeed to account for the widely different characteristics of this large family of mine is beyond me. In weakness or in strength there was and is an ineffaceable ego in every one of them who cannot be mistaken for another. No two take the same path in life, no two have the same tastes or the same temperament, and no one of them is a replica of father or mother.

At intervals in writing these memoirs I have been reading some delightful sketches by my friend W. H. Hudson, the naturalist, in which he broaches in a humorously cynical strain some of his theories about

children. In one of these sketches he declares that all infants at birth are ugly, "bearing the marks, say, of the paleolithic mother who was not much better looking than an ourang-outang, and it is only when the cartilaginous framework with its muscular covering becomes modified and the wrinkled brown visage of the ancient pigmy grows white and smooth that it can be recognised as Lady Clara Vere de Vere's own offspring." This idea gives rise to some strange musings. Does the crude body wait upon the fashioning of the ego which is to inhabit it and shape and model the features to be characteristic of its personality, and when and how does this spiritual force with its trailing clouds of glory enter into its earthly tabernacle? Then again, Hudson declares that the unsophisticated joy and beauty of a child begins to depart from it at latest by the age of seven years, and that he only likes to know children before the conventions of life and its self-consciousness come upon them. He declares that Lewis Carroll felt the same, and that he dismissed and forgot his Alices before they were eight or nine years old, believing that something came or would come to spoil the individual child spirit, which would never be quite the same again. Is all this Wordsworth? and does the light so soon fade into that of common day? I do not believe it, and yet the little Ego must get ready early to work out its own salvation and test the stuff it is made of by the rough usage of the world.

Let me turn again to publishing work which I found very absorbing. The complete success of the Temple Shakespeare indicated very clearly that there was a desire for the revival of the pocket classic. I set myself---I believe at some practical suggestions of my friend Evans, whose acquaintance with the book-buying public through his bookshop together with his

intimate knowledge of books was of much value to me —to plan out a series that should include choice literature for the real book-lover, produced on good paper, thin, opaque, and strong, so that a volume like Bacon's *Essays* could be carried lightly in the pocket without disturbing the symmetry of the most fashionably cut coat and might be a constant companion. Mr. Gollancz was to be the editor, and at his suggestion there were to be no introductions to come between readers and their favourite authors. The editorial work was intended to provide that the text chosen was the best possible, correctly printed, and that notes, strictly useful and not ornamental, should be confined to the smallest limits. The Temple Classics was launched most happily in the autumn of 1896 and met with quick recognition. Speedily we issued twenty volumes among which were some delightful books not usually included in popular series, e.g. Ben Jonson's *Timber*, Milton's *Areopagitica*, Chapman's *Homer*, whilst we were fortunate in being able by the generosity of Mr. F. S. Ellis to produce his translation of *The Romance of the Rose*, the unique rhymed translation in our language, which had only appeared in the very limited edition issued by William Morris. Mr. Ellis also prepared and edited for us Caxton's translation of *The Golden Legend*. Through the kindness and enthusiasm of my friends the Rev. P. H. Wicksteed who translated the *Paradiso* and *De Monarchia*, and Thomas Okey who translated the *Purgatorio*, we were able to produce the complete works of Dante in five volumes with the Italian on one page and the translation on the opposite, and this edition still remains the only complete Dante in English. We included some lighter authors and some modern English literature, such as Kinglake's *Eothen* and George Eliot's *Silas Marner*, and added some poetry like Wordsworth's *Prelude*, and much of Tennyson and

Browning. It was also a great joy to produce Sir Thomas North's *Plutarch* in ten volumes, so that one could take a few "lives" in one's pocket and enjoy the fine Elizabethan English, and the wonderful stories of the old world's great men.

Although the series itself was a strong incentive to hard work and gave intense pleasure through our connection with many scholars who became interested in the scheme, yet I must confess that many difficulties arose in the editorial work. For a time there was considerable friction which culminated in 1901 in a quarrel with the editor, and this was the most painful episode in my publishing career. It caused so much irritation and anxiety that I do not look back upon the work of producing this series with the same satisfaction that followed upon most of the publications of our house.

My friendship with Mr. Gollancz, in its early years, was one of much intimacy and, on my part, of affection and reverence for his scholarship. He was the first scholar with whom I had close relationship, and as my knowledge of literature was extremely limited, and my scholarship nil, I had a profound admiration for his attainments and his knowledge of the great authors, whom I only knew by reputation. I loved Shakespeare and the Bible, and this was common ground between us, and I am indebted to him for the stimulus he gave me to read and study. There was much in him that was very lovable. His reverence and love for his parents, his brother and sister, was very beautiful, and though his scholarship may have been less deep and profound than I first thought, yet he was very enthusiastic, and his love of literature was very real and true. Nothing in my business life gave me such intense pain as our parting, which nevertheless, in the interest of my business, I considered was necessary.

We continued the series under the editorship of my friend Oliphant Smeaton, who was the most enthusiastic and lovable of men, and a tremendous worker. He did all he could do to help me in the trouble I passed through during this quarrel with his predecessor, and together we produced a great deal of useful work, of which more later on in this story. . . .

One attractive scheme that grew out of the Temple Classics, my father has forgotten to mention. In the autumn of 1904, he decided to start, as a runner-up and companion to that series, a miniature quarterly, to be called *The Temple Classics Magazine*. It was launched in October of that year, and published at fairly long intervals; and it contained many interesting articles, out-of-the-way information, critical comments and *ana* dear to the book-lover. The motto was from William Hazlitt, a favourite one of the Chief's, who in this case acted as his own editor with the aid of Mr. F. Wheldon. "Books let us into their souls, and lay open to us the secrets of our own," was the central idea in it. In the Prelude to the first number, we are told that the magazine is issued by its publisher as a means of letting "his numerous and vastly distributed public" know about the new and forthcoming volumes of the "Temple" series, and of keeping open the communications between that public and himself. However, like many ventures of the kind, it proved too frail and small a craft for the open sea. It did bravely while it lasted, gave the public rare treasures in a nutshell, poems, critiques and literary bric-à-brac—portraits, too, of authors like Mrs. Gaskell; but it only ran to five numbers, and it will soon be as scarce as Browning's *Bells and Pomegranates* in the original sixpenny Moxon parts.

CHAPTER VII

Italy once more—Siena—Mrs. Oliphant: a Prose Portrait—Maurice Hewlett—Perugia—A Pathetic Figure—More Mediaeval Towns—Mrs. Ross—Florentine Memories—Rome—An Audience of the Pope—San Gimignano—A Comedy of Two Travellers—The Wine of Joy—Venice and its Olive-green Canals—Foreign Towns and English Cathedrals.

I NEVER forgot the deep impression Italian cities had made upon me and desired to produce a series of books which should tell the story of their mediaeval life, especially of those with a distinct personality and national life. Siena fascinated me most, and I determined to begin with this city. I read Mrs. Oliphant's two books *The Makers of Florence* and *The Makers of Venice*, and felt sure that she would be able not only to write of the men who made the cities, but of the historic events and circumstances that made them so deeply interesting. I obtained an introduction to her through Mr. Gerald Duckworth, who was then working with me (Mr. Duckworth has since made a reputation for himself as a publisher of many good books), and I went to interview her at her house on Wimbledon Common. It was indeed a great pleasure to meet this wonderful woman, not only for the value of her work, but for the great fight she had made in life—her noble continuous struggle for her family and her enormous industry. I found her in a quaint and delightful little house, her suitable environment. She was a lady under middle height, with a beautiful low broad forehead, and very dark keen eyes which held you strangely. You felt somehow that no suffering would break her spirit, and that her body must obey to

the last ounce of its strength her indomitable will. This I felt although I did not know her story until afterwards. Mrs. Oliphant undertook to go to Siena and write the book I wanted. Alas! although she went to the city and began the task, her health failed and she died without accomplishing it.

I applied next to Maurice Hewlett, whose *Masque of Dead Florentines* and *Earthwork out of Tuscany* I had lately published, and he undertook it, but again there was disappointment, for some engagement prevented him going to Italy, so that it seemed as if the project was to be thwarted. However, I did not cease to work for the idea, and at long last it came about, though I never feel quite sure how it happened, but I think it must have been in this way. Mr. Duckworth, who, as I have said, was with me, was the stepson of Leslie Stephen, and among his friends were the daughters of John Addington Symonds, to whom he mentioned the idea, and Miss Margaret, who had already written a charming volume (I think the title was *On a Venetian Farm*), became very interested and offered in co-operation with her friend Miss Lina Duff-Gordon to write one of the books and chose Perugia. This offer I was only too glad to accept and the book was the first to appear in February 1898. It was followed rapidly by a volume on Nuremberg by my friend Cecil Headlam, and then by one on Florence by another great friend and fine scholar, Mr. Edmund Gardner. All these books were popular and were followed by some twenty more volumes. Work on this series led me into some of the most pleasant relationships of my life and took me to Italy every year for many years, for I made it a point as far as it was possible to see every city that was described.

While Miss Symonds and Miss Duff-Gordon were writing their book on Perugia I received one day a

letter from a lady saying she wanted to live in Italy for the greater part of the year, and being something of a black-and-white artist desired some task that would give her interest and purpose. She did not need to earn much, although she would like to make enough to cover her expenses. At that time I had not thought of having any illustrations in the books beyond a few photographs, neither could I afford them if I was to issue the books at a popular price, though of course I should very much have liked to have had them. When her letter came I wrote asking that if she really could afford to do the work at the nominal price mentioned would she kindly call with some drawings for me to see. She did so and I found her one of the most pathetic little figures I have ever seen. Miss Helen James was short of stature with a twisted spine, and walked with crutches. She had delicate health, beautiful eyes and a determined little mouth and chin. She showed me her drawings, which though somewhat weak in line were full of the right feeling for architecture; we soon arranged terms and she became the illustrator of the series until her death from an attack of measles in Italy. She was a wonderful example of what spiritual force can do in spite of frailty of body: for besides working in Italy she was eager to go wherever I wanted drawings.

I remember telling her that I had had an offer of a book on Moscow, but did not know what to do about it because I could not afford to send an artist there and yet did not like to have a book in the series without illustrations. She at once declared she would go. I remonstrated with her and thought it impossible, but she almost said that our friendship depended on my allowing her to go, and she urged me so much that I reluctantly consented. She went alone and set to work to learn sufficient Russian to serve her purpose (she was

a capable linguist and spoke Italian, French and Spanish fluently), and sat in the streets of Moscow making her drawings while the Russian gendarme was quite puzzled what to do with her. She came home safely by herself on her poor crutches and went for me to France, to Spain and back to Italy as if it was all quite simple and part of the ordinary day's work. Bravest and truest of souls! A devout Catholic and a most enthusiastic and loyal friend. Her heroic spirit overcame the hindrances of bodily defects and her life was filled with joyful work.

The production of this series of mediaeval towns brought in its train many delightful experiences and many strange contrasts. I was busy in my office one beautiful summer morning when two ladies were announced and shown into my room. I know I shall be accused of hyperbolical sentiment when I say that I was startled by a vision of beauty such as I have never beheld before nor since, heightened by the exquisite contrast of two faces. One was a dark brunette with a golden-olive complexion and the other fair with grey-blue eyes and mouse-coloured hair and as fair a face as I ever saw; each had features of perfect outline and distinction, and each lady was tall and graceful in figure. They were a perfect complement one to the other. No such vision of human beauty has ever come to me though I have travelled far and seen much of loveliness in women of many nations. These ladies were Miss Margaret Symonds and Miss Lina Duff-Gordon who together wrote the *Story of Perugia*, and my little lame friend, Miss Helen James, attended them to draw the pictures for the book!

Miss Duff-Gordon introduced me to her aunt, Mrs. Janet Ross, who invited me to stay with her whenever I was in Florence, and I took full advantage of this hospitality so generously offered. I can never be

grateful enough for all the delightful experiences which these visits gave me. Mr. and Mrs. Ross lived in an old castle, built in pre-Renaissance times close to where Michael Angelo was born and lived, in the Via Settignano. It is called Poggio Gherardo and it is high up on a hill set in a great *podere* which is familiar to all who know Florence. I remember very vividly my first visit. It was a brilliant afternoon in late April and there was a great joy even in the drive from the station for some two miles or so through lanes many times trodden by sculptors, artists and architects in the great days of Florence. Through the gates the carriage-way went up the hill for nearly a mile, and I remember that it was lined all the way with rose-bushes in full bloom and fragrance. The *podere* was planted thickly with pear and peach trees, and they too were bursting with blooms while the vines were already in full leaf. It was indeed Flora's holiday. "Oh! to be in England now that April's here," wrote Browning —that is also a great exaltation, but exquisite luxurious colour and abounding promise of life add a sensuous joy that Florence alone can give. From the terrace of Mrs. Ross's villa there is one of the noblest views of the City of Flowers, not even from Fiesole or from San Miniato (though here you have the winding river also) can you see more entrancing beauty.

Here I met many notabilities, for Mrs. Ross's Sunday afternoons were a marked feature in Florence and people of all nationalities resorted to these conversaziones, and it was a great privilege to know many of her friends. Some of the most honoured visitors were Professor and Madame Villari, and Lady Paget. Here also I met Signore Biagi, the custodian of the Laurentian Library, who gave me access to all its treasures, Mr. Bernhard Berensen and his wife, Sir William and Lady Markby and many others. Mr. Ross was a remarkably good

raconteur. He had a wonderful collection of stories of his life in Turkey and Egypt which he told with dramatic vigour and colour, and he was a most delightful host. Mr. Ross, an octogenarian and an invalid, would sit in his great open drawing-room or saloon, where he kept in a large cage a nightingale which he had brought up from the nest almost, and it was indeed a wonder. One has always thought of the nightingale as a bird who for song must needs have cloistered shade and evening lights, but this bird had never known such delights, though Heaven had not taken from it the gift of song, and it would come out into Mr. Ross's hand to be fed and caressed, and after its meal would perch on his shoulder and pour out a wondrous flood of melody, its little body vibrating and throbbing with ecstasy. It was a delight to see this intimacy between a man and this beautiful creature, and its rapture infected us all and we felt something of the bird's wondrous exaltation. It lived for some years and became absolutely one of the family, free to wander where it would or to live where it would, and apparently it never attempted to leave the safe household. Plenty of tame birds have I known, but never such intimacy accompanied by such perfect happiness, since a bird could never pour out such perfect melody of thrilling joy—for that is what it seemed to us—if it felt care or fear. Mrs. Ross was quite the *Grande Dame*, yet democratic in her choice of friends. To have done anything of note was sufficient for an *entrée* to her circle. Cleverness, talent or capability were the qualities that made her your friend. Her hates and loves and admirations were strong, and she was a gracious hostess and I shall never forget her goodness to me. Apropos of those Florentine days, there is a capital story of Professor Villari which I must needs tell here.

I was invited by Madame Villari to accompany Miss

Duff-Gordon to afternoon-tea at her house. Madame Villari was well known as an Englishwoman of sturdy build and stentorian voice and for somewhat too vigorously declaring her nationality in a rather John Bullish style. It was at the time of the Boer War and during tea she had been defending the British Government and the war, of which the Professor strongly disapproved, as indeed did many thoughtful English folk. During a pause in Madame Villari's declamations he turned his refined face to Miss Duff-Gordon (who was a great favourite of his) and said with a charming smile, "Ah! Lina, I must tell you of a vision I have had —a great vision." We were, of course, all on tip-toe with excitement to hear. He said, "I did dream that I was on the Mount of the Purgatorio climbing upwards with great labour when I met a man coming down in sad distress, groaning and moaning with pain, and I said, 'Oh, what is the matter? What is the matter? Who are you? Pray tell me all about it.' And he said, 'Oh, I am Job and I am full of trouble, full of trouble.' 'Ah, what is it? Surely it must be terrible.' And he said, 'It is too grievous to tell.' 'Oh, do tell me—have you got an English wife?' 'Oh no,' he said. 'Ah!' said I, 'then you know nothing about trouble, I assure you.'" Madame Villari enjoyed the story and laughed louder than any of us.

But my investigations led me to many shrines besides Florence, to Assisi—the beloved city of St. Francis—Perugia, Ferrara, Verona, Pisa, Siena, and to Venice where I spent many delightful days at the house of my friend Madame Wiel, who wrote *The Story of Verona.* Here I met Lady Layard and enjoyed the great picture gallery in her palace; also I met Mr. Horatio Brown, who wrote for me a delightful primer on *The History of the Venetian Republic.* I went to Rome with my friend Gardner, where I had the honour of an interview with

the Pope, a man of dignified simplicity. No one seeing him could fail to believe in his pure sincerity, but I must relate the impressions of my visit. All visitors who are called to an audience with the Holy Father must wear evening dress, and my friend was rather perturbed when I told him that I had no regulation fiddle coat with me, but only a velvet dinner-jacket which was a great deal more comfortable. However, he said he would inspect me in it, and if it was not too outrageous I might be allowed to pass. So he came up into my room and saw it on, but he was very dubious, and said it savoured more of the smoke-room than the Vatican, but decided to pass it, saying I should be taken for some erratic foreigner who had not learnt the rules of etiquette and therefore must be excused. On my arrival at the Vatican with Mrs. and Miss Gardner we were ushered into the great audience chamber, among a numerous company of all nationalities, and my friend need not have bothered about my costume, for others were of all descriptions and colours. I remember one French boy whose evening dress was white, and very charming he looked. We were ranged round the chamber close to the wall, so that His Holiness might pass round with perfect freedom, and from where I was placed one could see down the long corridor from which the Pope would enter the audience chamber. There was a little party of Germans who rudely pushed up to the entrance to the corridor in order to catch the first sight of the procession, and gave the custodian much trouble in putting them back into their places. A great silence for a while and then a tall, erect, dignified man in white moved down into the room, and we all knelt for his blessing; I—true Protestant that I was—as reverently as the rest, compelled by the benignity and dignity of the man, and with my whole heart believing in his sincerity. As he passed round, giving his hand to be

kissed and blessing each individually, he came suddenly upon a Franciscan friar whom he recognised as an old friend and a brother of his early days, when he at once forgot his great dignity and fondled and kissed him with pure delight. It was indeed exceedingly touching, this revelation of the heart of the peasant Pope.

On my last visit to Florence, while staying at Poggio Gherardo, together with Miss Nelly Erichsen (the artist who took up Miss James's task after her death) and Dr. Lindsay, we decided with Mrs. Ross to take a carriage and drive to Siena and stay at San Gimignano by the way. The four of us were packed comfortably into an open carriage which was pulled by two lean and wiry horses, and we set out in the early morning across the city and through the Porta Romana on our journey. It was a wonderful journey; we seemed to pass through a panorama of pictures by Tuscan and Umbrian painters, for the scenery was that which has been used as backgrounds by nearly all Florentine and Umbrian painters. The rich brown of the rocks—the delicate Lombardy poplars in spring leafage—the little waterfalls—the Renaissance palaces—the old walled cities—the perfect Italian blue skies. What a succession of pictures! And the towns with their wonderful gateways, and their stone-paved streets over which our carriage clattered at high speed with cracking whip and jangling bells, to be pulled up at the door of the *albergo*, where we stopped to refresh the horses and drink some of the local wine. We spent the night at San Gimignano, that marvellous and perfectly preserved city where you get the most complete idea of the mediaeval walled town with watch-towers still in perfect preservation. The very people are of the *quattrocento* in many ways. No railways disturb its quiet, and the silvery olive-trees surround its walls on every side. When we got to Poggibonsi a storm came on with drenching showers

which wetted us through, and Mrs. Ross then said that we must not attempt to go to Siena but return from San Gimignano; but I said I must go even if the party returned without me, as I had made an appointment with a lady who was writing a book for me and I must keep it. Mrs. Ross declared that I was not to be trusted alone, and that if I *was* determined to go she must come with me to take care of me, for I knew no Italian, and there would be no sleeping-room to be got as the city was full. I was compelled to insist on going, and the next morning we set off. When we arrived in the city, sure enough the hotels were full and we could get no harbourage. We were indeed offered a double room, but my "guide" with the utmost scorn repudiated the idea that I was her husband, and we were almost in despair of getting a night's lodging when a man who heard our talk at the hotel door told us that he knew of some beds to let and directed us to one of the old palaces, where we secured a resting-place and two sleeping-rooms. Mrs. Ross rested while I went out for a stroll and to seek my friend Miss Vida Scudder, who was then translating for me *The Letters of St. Catherine of Siena*, which appeared in 1905.

I found she was out for the afternoon, but arranged to call in the evening after dinner, and I returned to find my companion refreshed and ready to go and seek our dinner, which we decided to take in a comfortable restaurant on the Campo, where we could have a beautiful view of the Palazzo Pubblico. Our dinner was good and well served, with some delicious Umbrian wine, and after a short stroll Mrs. Ross went to her room for what I hoped was a good night's rest, and I went to talk over with my friend the project for the volume of St. Catherine's Letters. I had a lovely walk home in the moonlight in this fascinating, weird and wonderful city, and rejoiced to find that my bedroom

window looked over the roofs to the great Duomo, and its bells boomed out the hours whilst I lay awake entranced with the picture which the silvery light made most dreamingly beautiful—and the dawn had changed the silver into gold before I went to sleep. But that picture is my possession and will never be erased.

When we met in the morning Mrs. Ross was very cross, and on my asking declared that she "had never slept a wink"—in fact she had not been to bed, for the sheets turned out to be damp, and she had lain in her rug on the sofa all night.

When breakfast appeared the bread was unleavened and sour—the eggs boiled to a stone—and she could eat nothing. I was crushed! She suggested that people who were unable to take care of themselves should not go travelling about to other people's annoyance, and I, a poor boy of only some fifty odd summers, followed her down to the carriage with my tail well between my legs, but not unamused withal.

I do not think my lady ever quite forgave me for that escapade, but I comfort myself for the distress she certainly endured by remembering that it was of her own free will she chose to make the journey.

How many pictures crowd my memory when I think of those Italian days—that wonderful one in the great Duomo of Ferrara on a festival day in its nave—only second to St. Peter's at Rome for space—crowded to the uttermost, the chancel brilliant with scarlet cardinals, a combined choir singing a grand Mass full of wonderful choruses, and a rich warmth of light from a thousand candles. All was a setting to one old man's venerable head being fondled by a little child, with a perfect devotion. It was a head to which only Vandyke could have done justice, but he could never have reproduced the serene and perfect joy of the old man's face in the love of the beautiful child.

On a notable day at Assisi, with a party of the Art Workers' Guild I went to the little Porziuncula and listened to a cherubic French monk telling the wonderful legends of St. Francis. I worshipped in the tiny chapel, looking up to Della Robbia's pathetic statue of St. Francis, but with all its beauty it is not the St. Francis we know—joyous and glad—in his perfect joy was the little *jongleur*—suffering for his Lord or his people was his soul's completest happiness.

How the story subdued the boisterous spirits of the Artists on holiday! How it seemed as if the pretty stories and legends were received as gospel truth by them—how each bought a souvenir of the blood-besprinkled rose-bush, and how we all loved the little cherubic French monk who spoke such pretty English. How we climbed the hill of Perugia in the burning sun of a September morning, and how when we reached the summit we found an old man with a great basket of green figs, with the dewy bloom on them—how I rushed for a handful, and when I paid him a penny he called me back, "Signore! Signore!" and filled my other hand—fancy a London costermonger doing that! And how that same party, somewhere near Sestri Levante, after climbing another hill, panting with exceeding great thirst, could find nothing to quench it until we reached a little *podere* and found a peasant's house, and how he took us to a little outhouse and after removing much straw showed us a pile of wine-bottles. How we raided them at a lira apiece—such a beverage I have never tasted before or since—bubbling, sparkling, and frothing—champagne was tame lemonade beside it. I am a very abstemious man, but I had sent two bottles gurgling down my throat before I knew what I was about, and I was not very drunk after it—I assure you. It was the wine of the joy of Italian life and made me, a man going on in the fifties, frolicsome as a boy.

Oh! the colour of those autumn days in Italy! The purple vineyards, the great lemon orchards, the olive groves loaded with fruit, the large maize stalks, with rich crimson leaves massed in the far-outstretching fields on the Lombardy plain. And then across the Apennines on that delightful ride to Florence, for which some people take the night train in order to avoid the monotony of the journey! How entrancing in line and colour it was everywhere and what a vision it all seems to me now.

And then to Venice! What days of sheer entrancement have I spent on its olive-green waters, for they are that colour nearly always, olive with a wonderful embroidery of golden threads of straws floating on their surface, which the sun lights up and makes you dream of the vestments of some great high priest; brown sails —a brown one never sees anywhere else, with the crimson emblem of the patron Saint Mark, and the sides of the boats in scarlet and emerald green. The gleam of white towers and domes and minarets, what a unique world it is in itself! Then the glorious Duomo—it always seemed strange to me, entering from a façade of delicate columns and wonderful minarets, to find arches like barbaric caves covered, as it seemed, by plates of beaten gold, the whole making you feel it had been dug out of the solid earth and lined by primitive smiths with precious metal. But something finer than refined gold covers these massive arches, something that is the peculiar glory of Venice in decoration—mosaic which seems as if it had been made out of its own sunsets and becomes its natural adornment.

The entrancing row across the lagoons in a gondola to Murano and Torcello—one should never touch a steamer in Venice, it seems a desecration—and we were fortunate in our gondolier, who could sing, and his amorous ditties from the Italian operas seemed a part

of the languorous day. And then to come into touch with joyous St. Francis again, for here he told the birds to cease their carolling while he went aside to pray.

But I must not go on, though to call back these days of joyous life is to live it all over again with perfect contentment, even if the little troubles, like the ubiquitous mosquito, which disturbed the days themselves, are not quite forgotten.

The mediaeval towns quest sent me to Nuremberg, to Chartres, to Paris, to Padua, Verona, Pisa, to Prague, to Mayence, to Dresden, to Munich, though no books were written for me on some of these cities, and then to our own cathedral cities, and a city not to be surpassed by any of the others is Canterbury, surrounded by Kent's garden of loveliness; to Wells, the most wonderful in some ways of our English cathedrals, Lincoln, Salisbury, Gloucester and, above all, to Ely, which I knew intimately. It has been my good fortune to be on intimate terms with some of the deans of these great psalms in stone, which have ever been to me a perfect wonder of delight.

CHAPTER VIII

Balzac — *La Comédie Humaine* — Mr. George Saintsbury — Landor — Love Peacock — Dr. Richard Garnett — The Woodford House — Epping Forest — The College of a Village — Lectures and Entertainments — *The Old Yellow Book* — Second Visit to America — Two Moves: St. James's Street and Bedford Street, Covent Garden — Haddon Hall Library — A Yorkshire Book.

WHILE the Temple Shakespeare was passing through the press Mr. A. R. Waller, who was with us at the time, urged me to begin a translation of Balzac's *Comédie Humaine*. I must confess I was utterly ignorant of the whole of it except perhaps *Père Goriot*, and I was sceptical as to how an English audience would receive such a stupendous dose of French literature translated into English. I, however, have always been open to suggestions and immediately set to work to read some of the shorter books, and on Waller's recommendation I began with *La Peau de Chagrin* in an American translation. The book was a revelation to me and it has since remained my favourite among the forty volumes we produced. Eagerly I read many other volumes, and though I doubted whether the English public would appreciate such an undertaking, still I agreed to attempt the publication if we could find adequate translators. It was a tremendous venture for a young house and I did not feel as much confidence in it as I should like to have done, but I went on reading, and began to feel that if the English public would not support me it was because they did not know the value of Balzac. There had been no adequate translation of the *Comédie* in England, and

we were extraordinarily fortunate in obtaining the services of Miss Ellen Marriage through the friendship of Mr. Waller. We also had the good luck to secure Mr. George Saintsbury as editor when he had just retired from the *Saturday Review* and had the necessary leisure to undertake the work. Miss Marriage has since been acknowledged as the ideal interpreter of Balzac, not only by the editor, but by other critics, so that we began work under good auspices. We decided to have some etchings as illustrations, and secured the help of Mr. Boucher, who took the utmost pains to give capital costume pictures that might help to bring back the feeling of the period. I went to arrange the plan of the undertaking with Mr. Saintsbury, who invited me to dinner at his rooms.

His was a wonderful library with books crowded everywhere, on shelves, desks, and chairs, and he had just secured a set of the "Edition Définitive" of Balzac's *Comédie Humaine*, and told me he was about to enjoy himself by going through the whole fifty volumes. He was indeed an omnivorous reader, a gourmand among books. When dinner arrived he was distressed when I told him that I took no wine. He had prepared a deliciously choice meal, and had arranged a selection of wine to take with it and after it, and it was a grave disappointment to him that he had to keep it up by himself. When dinner was finished he asked mournfully if I smoked, and was more happy when he knew that I did. He went to his divan and chose with great care a cigar for me, but was horror-struck when I produced a wax lucifer to light it with. He stopped me in time, found a piece of wood and lit it for me, saying that the stench of a wax match was ruin to the enjoyment of a cigar, and that all his life he had striven to find the very best in everything, both material and spiritual, and I believe he had—for he was and is a

very fine critic—though in carrying out his aim he did not improve his own style or his own physical health. I have heard it said that Mr. George Saintsbury was an overbearing, choleric man. I can only say that in the many years that I have known him and in the many transactions I have had with him I have always found him most kind and sympathetic and invariably courteous —but I never touched on politics!

And so in 1895 the project was launched, and my fears with regard to England were largely realised, for we did not sell enough sets to pay for the paper of the edition; but fortunately America came to our rescue, and we had a cable from Messrs. Macmillan asking us to reserve the American rights for them. They at once ordered a thousand sets and followed it up by a larger order, so that it became a very reasonable and substantial success. What gave me the greatest satisfaction was that though the sale was not large we clearly met a real want in issuing a complete edition of the *Comédie Humaine*, and still more, we had done it well. Miss Marriage could not do all the work but was our mainstay, while Mrs. Scott (the wife of the editor and owner of the *Manchester Guardian*) and Mrs. Bell proved adequate coadjutors. For some of the novels there is always a steady sale, but there has never been an adequate appreciation of Balzac in England so far as we can gauge by our sales over twenty-three years. We have, however, had great satisfaction in keeping alive and in print not a few books that apparently would otherwise have largely been lost to the public.

For instance, beginning in 1891 we published a fairly complete edition of Walter Savage Landor in ten volumes, which Mr. C. G. Crump most carefully edited, and which had always been kept in print up to 1916, but after the war it was found impossible

to produce the books at a price which would enable them to be sold at 5s., although in pre-war days the published price had been only 3s. 6d. We also printed in the same year the whole of Peacock's works under the editorship of Dr. Richard Garnett, and it was the only edition extant until the Halliford edition recently published by Messrs. Constable & Co. Ltd.[1] In later years we followed this by the only complete edition of Hazlitt's works that has been attempted. There is a great satisfaction in doing a piece of work—if somewhat imperfectly—that wanted doing, even if it involved some risk.

In the seven busy years, during which we had produced some three hundred volumes, my circumstances had so far improved that I was able to pay off all my indebtedness to my good friend George Carter, and felt a free man. In all the forty-nine years of my business life the occasions were very rare when I did not need money. In 1896 I was compelled either to leave or to buy my premises at 69 Great Eastern Street, where I still carried on bookbinding and publishing business. I managed to buy it in January 1897 with the help of the bank and a mortgage on the property, which, however, crippled me again for capital. The need also of having an office where our clients could be served not far away from civilisation caused us to take premises in St. James's Street, W., in 1896, where,

[1] In the early part of 1891 my father's old friend, Mr. F. H. Evans, asked if he was a "Peacockian." He replied, "What on earth is that?" Mr. Evans dilated on his old favourite and suggested that it was time for a new edition of Peacock's works. Further, if my father would take up the suggestion he would get him the ideal editor. The Chief having agreed to do so, Mr. Evans waited until Mr. Edward Garnett's next visit to his bookshop, and over a cup of tea requested him to tell his father that he had a job for him. On being told of the new project Dr. Garnett said it was the very thing he would like best to do. I believe that Dr. Garnett greatly enjoyed the work and I know that my father gained much pleasure from the friendship he made with his editor of Thomas Love Peacock.

however, we only stayed for a year or two as the premises were coming down.

At this time I had the great luck to secure a house at Woodford, near Epping Forest, which had some three acres or more of garden round it, and opened to large fields owned by my landlord. My family had grown apace and we now numbered eight, five boys and three girls, so we had need of more space and fresh air, and we had a most happy family life there. It was new to have free roaming space around us, and life for some years ran very smoothly. As I have said, my eldest son George was exiled from us, but he had become quite sturdy in health, and was able at last to visit us in years that were to come.

My son Hugh was established in the business and John had begun business in his own craft, that of a photo-engraver, in which he was highly skilled. In the Woodford house we kept high festival almost every summer week-end in the garden, and when the day came that we could afford a carriage and drive about our lovely county of Essex in the early morning through Epping woodlands, I thought that our earthly felicity was complete and desired nothing more of material enjoyment.

I went year after year to Italy up to the year 1908, and had generally some enterprise that drew me there —a book on the Florentine Villas, one on the Casentino, books on Rome and one on the Venetian Palaces. I am afraid I ever lent a willing ear to any project that drew me to Italy. It was not often that I could have my wife's company on these excursions, as only twice did she accompany me to Italy, and once or twice to France. Her family cares and the necessity of being with the children on their holidays made it difficult. I ever regret it, for in our older years we might have enjoyed memories of travel together.

But we had delightful times in our Georgian house and beautiful old-world garden, and we rarely had our spare bedrooms empty, I am glad to say. My friends were many and we had much delightful intercourse, even though we lived in the East End. Amongst them were Philip Wicksteed, Edmund Gardner, Arthur Burrell, Dr. Green (the botanist), Dean Stubbs of Ely, democrat and Christian Socialist and one of the best of fellows, Principal Lindsay of Glasgow, and once or twice Canon and Mrs. Barnett. I asked some of these friends to lecture for a society which had been founded in Woodford before we came, and which met at the houses of its members. Gardner talked to us about Dante, Wicksteed about Wordsworth, and Dean Stubbs about Browning, whilst Burrell delighted us by his wonderful folk-lore tales and Canon Barnett lectured on social topics.

One of the great pleasures we had here was a circle which gathered at my house weekly to read some of the longer poems of our poets, namely, Wordsworth's *Prelude*, Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, and the like. The members were mostly elementary-school teachers, and to many of them it seemed to open up a new world. One incident I remember which showed how keenly interested some of us were. We had finished reading *The Ring and the Book*, and in closing I said what a pity it was that *The Old Yellow Book*—the source from which Browning drew the great incident of his poem—was not at our disposal, for I did not think it had been translated, and we could not, as was the case with Shakespeare, and say, Plutarch, compare the author's work with his original, and might see from what root the flower had sprung. A few days afterwards I received a letter from one of the members telling me that I was mistaken and that *The Old Yellow Book* had been translated and issued with a facsimile of the original

29–30 Bedford Street, London

by the Carnegie Institute of Washington, U.S.A. I immediately looked into it and obtained leave from the translator and the Institute to reprint it—and it is now in the Everyman's Library. But I am getting garrulous, like all old men whose minds are full of the past are bound to do, and I must restrain myself. They were indeed full and happy times that I am glad to recall.

I had been to America for the second time in February 1897, and had opened up some new relationships, but at this time The Macmillan Company accepted nearly all my publications for America, and Mr. Frederick Macmillan especially was very friendly to my work and gave me much encouragement. But I had the most friendly relationship with Messrs. Lippincott of Philadelphia, Messrs. Scribners and Messrs. Dodd, Mead and Co. of New York, Messrs. Little, Brown and Co. of Boston, and these relations have continued ever since. I began to buy from these friends American editions to sell in Great Britain, and became the agent for a good many American publications: for instance, with Messrs. Little, Brown and Co. we published a complete set of Dumas's novels, with Messrs. Scribners a set of Turgenieff's works, and with Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin and Co. a complete set of Burroughs's works, and we had much pleasure in the reciprocation, as Messrs. Little, Brown and Co. published in America our edition of Marryat's novels, Messrs. Scribners the Temple Scott, etc.

As I have said, we had taken some rooms in St. James's Street in 1896, but we had scarcely been established there before we were told that we could not stay as the whole of the premises were coming down, so in 1897 we had to look out for some premises in the West End.

In the autumn of the same year Mr. Waller and Mr. Duckworth informed me that they had determined to

go into partnership as publishers, and would be leaving me at the end of the year, so that I had to re-shape my business once more. I do not think these affairs daunted me very much. I had passed the heavier difficulties and I set myself, with the help of my son Hugh, to master these, and they were soon overcome. It would, of course, have been impossible without his aid, as what I proposed or planned he helped to carry out, and helped, too, in the planning. Towards the end of this year—1897—Messrs. Macmillan completed their new building in St. Martin's Street, and their old premises—29–30 Bedford Street—were to let. There was a remainder of fifteen years of the lease to run and the rent was £750 a year, with all the repairs! and it staggered us at first. Still it was a great temptation to take over the house with which so many of the great names of the century had been associated—Maurice, Kingsley, Tom Hughes, Huxley, Tyndall, Tennyson and many another. We decided to burn our ships and take it, though we had to rely upon subletting a considerable portion. The venture proved quite successful as our business at once increased and continued to do so uninterruptedly for many years.

I had scarcely completed buying my premises in Great Eastern Street and transferring the publishing office to 29 Bedford Street before the London County Council informed me that I must either put in another staircase, by which the work-people could escape in case of fire, or I must cease to employ a certain number of people. I had to acknowledge that the Council were right, for there was a serious danger if a fire should break out in the daytime, but owing to the structure of the building it was entirely impossible to put in another staircase. I had, therefore, to face the fact that the buying of the building had been all in vain, and that I must immediately find another place. This proved

very troublesome because in the new building it was necessary to have the two staircases. However, a friend of mine had been in the same predicament as myself and had been compelled to alter his premises, and then after all to turn out. He offered the premises to me, but again I was forced to buy as I could not rent the building and my earnings had to go to pay off the new mortgage. We removed the bindery to the new building in Fleur de Lis Street, Bishopsgate, in October 1899, and continued there until we built our own works at Letchworth seven years later.

In our new home we at once began many serious enterprises, one of which gave us great pleasure, namely, The Haddon Hall Library. It was suggested to us by Mr. G. A. B. Dewar, and was to be a series of volumes covering outdoor recreations and delights. It was begun in the spring of 1899 under the joint editorship of the Marquess of Granby and Mr. Dewar, and we were indeed most fortunate in getting one of the first volumes written by (then) Sir Edward Grey, who at that time was out of office and had leisure for writing, and this book I venture to say will become an English classic and endure for many generations. Another valuable contributor was Dean Hole, who wrote for the series *Our Gardens*, whilst other volumes were by Mr. Shand on *Shooting*, Mr. Edmund Selous on *Bird Watching*, the Hon. R. H. Lyttelton on *Cricket and Golf*, Mr. J. Otho Paget on *Hunting*, Mr. Dewar on *Wild Life in Hampshire*, Mr. Nisbet on *Our Forests and Woodlands*, Mr. W. M. Tod on *Farming*, etc. The series, especially at first, was a real success. Mr. Arthur Rackham—who has since delighted us with delicate colour work, but was known then only as a black-and-white artist who had done some work for us in the illustrations to the *Ingoldsby Legends*, issued during the previous year—was secured for the decorations and

cover designs, and various artists helped us with pictures, notably Miss Lucy Kemp-Welch with the drawings for *Farming*, while the volumes were printed by Messrs. T. and A. Constable and Messrs. Ballantyne, Hanson and Co. The books were a delight to produce and are always a great pleasure to browse over on quiet, sunny days.

Another enjoyable task was the production of a Larger Temple Shakespeare. Many inquiries had been made for a library edition of the popular one-play-in-a-volume edition, and in 1898 we set about it. Everything Shakespearian had great interest for me and the enterprise was soon afloat with Mr. Gollancz as editor. The distinguishing feature, apart from its larger type for plays and poems in twelve volumes, was the inclusion of illustrations throughout the notes and glossary. There are many archaic words and expressions in Shakespeare that can only be effectively and fully explained by illustrations, e.g. a piece of armour, terms in falconry and other sports, etc., and, moreover, the complete significance in the text cannot be fully appreciated without them. Researches were made at the British Museum by Mr. A. J. Grieve and the indefatigable Miss Edwardes, who later compiled for us a short Shakespearian concordance, and we had the advantage of all Fairholt's drawings for Halliwell-Phillipps's *Monumental Shakespeare*, of which we had the luck to secure a copy, and I hope I am not presumptuous in saying that we did a public service in making these illustrations known to a wider audience.

In 1899 we began to issue in parts a *Picturesque History of Yorkshire*, written for us by J. S. Fletcher, furnished with six hundred illustrations drawn on the spot by various artists, among them being Alfred Parsons, G. S. Elgood, Herbert Railton, William Hyde, Jessie Macgregor, and my friend Helen James. The

illustrations were well done and carefully produced, but alas! if one can judge by the sale of the History, Yorkshire folk did not take any great interest in their glorious county of broad acres and wondrous abbeys and cathedrals, for it was not a financial success; but I am glad we did it, as from me it was an offering of homage to the county from which we Dents sprang. In the year 1899 we also issued a pocket edition of the Waverley Novels in forty-eight volumes with bibliographical introductions by Clement Shorter. It is still to my mind the most delightful edition in which to read in perfect leisure the wizard's incomparable stories. We followed it by an edition of Dickens in a similar format, so that the works of these two great English novelists might be carried about in cosy pocket volumes.

We were able, by the help of Messrs. Little, Brown and Co. of Boston, to bring out for the first time in English the great novels of Sienkiewicz in several volumes, our first excursion into Russian literature, and a few years later this was followed by a complete edition of Tolstoy's works, also from American sources. But a mere catalogue of our activities in these years would fill a heavy volume of itself.

CHAPTER IX

Men I have known—Andrew Lang—A Bon Mot—Sir Edward Grey —Dean Hole—Stopford Brooke—Dr. Furnivall—Jo. Pennell— — A Lunch with Whistler—The Joy of Work—New Ideas—(Professor Walter Ripman) — The Temple Primers — Home Life— The Woodford House—A French Visit—Chartres—Herbert Railton and Cecil Headlam—Lamb's Essays—Hazlitt and W. E. Henley — A Complete Elia — Copyright — Eccentricities of the Law—"The Forfeit of my Bond."

AT this time I came into touch with many literary men of whom I have the pleasantest recollections. Andrew Lang edited for me an edition of Scott's lyrics, writing a most charming and delightful introduction. He edited also an edition of Walton's *Compleat Angler*, which we produced with illustrations by E. J. Sullivan, and which, alas! has never been properly appreciated by the public. I wonder if Walton himself has been, except by the select few.

I have collected rather a good bon mot about this editor. Mr. Kegan Paul (the "unfortunate" publisher) was lecturing at Toynbee Hall on "The Making of Books," and in the course of his address came across the name of Andrew Lang. "Ah!" he said. "There is Andrew Lang—there was a time when he had something to say. Alas! now he has to say something." It was true enough I fear, but that "something" was always said as no one else could say it, and it is always a charm to read whatever he wrote.

It was a great privilege to meet and to talk to Sir Edward Grey, and a real refreshment to look at him in those days before the terrible task he was called

upon to undertake in the Great War. Somehow he always struck me as if he were a public-school boy of somewhat grave demeanour dressed in man's clothes. To look into his eyes gave you a sense of absolute trust in all he would say or do, whilst the refined, classic features seemed to breathe an atmosphere of perpetual youth, with always a sense of gravity and responsibility. This is the vision of him that my memory retains. Dean Hole, bubbling over with energy at eighty years of age, intensely enthusiastic about his garden and his roses, he too had a sense of overgrown (in a double sense) boyhood and delight in life. And then there was Stopford Brooke who had edited Coleridge for us; whoever knew him counted it among the greatest privileges of his life, such perfect bonhomie, such delightful companionship in him, and from what a full mind and heart and soul did he talk! How, with his favourite big cheroot and his large cup of tea, he forgot the hours while he talked of the great in literature. He had a room at the back of his chapel where he took lunch and did most of his writing, and I was favoured with more than one invitation to eat with him and to hear him talk. No one could but love Brooke after hearing his glorious panegyrics, and after he had quoted with sometimes thrilling enthusiasm some fine lines, say, from Shelley, he would chuckle and cry "Hwat! Hwat!" in perfect enjoyment. What a head he had, the handsomest man I ever knew, with a face you could never forget.

Another scholar of a different type but of many enthusiasms was Dr. Furnivall, a great servant of literature for which he laboured with perfect devotion, but a somewhat eccentric and disturbing character withal. He was most helpful in praise and suggestions for my undertakings, and it was always good to see his bright optimistic face. I remember last meeting him in

Trafalgar Square walking along in shirt-sleeves, carrying his coat on his arm; with sweat oozing out of his bald head he glowed like a harvest moon. He called out to me to have a strawberry, and handed me a bag of doubtful mushy strawberries he had just bought of a costermonger. Yet at times he was certainly embarrassing. Cecil Clay had asked Dr. Furnivall and myself to go down to the opening of an institute which his firm had built for their work-people at Bungay. In the course of his address Dr. Furnivall described his attempts with Kingsley and Maurice to get hold of the working-man and make him a scholar. He described in detail the filth the people lived in, the state of the stairs of the model lodging-house and the stench, etc., and compared it with the present day. And then he began to inveigh against the way in which some people kept Sunday. He advised the workers not to be inveigled into church on a Sunday by a lot of mouldy parsons, but to go out on the river and the moors and take some exercise and get air into their lungs. He declared it was a waste of life to spend it in church listening to outworn doctrines. Now as the room was full of church- and chapel-going folk, with a fair sprinkling of parsons, it began to empty, and you could feel boiling indignation working up amongst the audience. It fell to me as the next speaker to throw oil on the troubled waters.

I was invited by Joseph Pennell, the artist, to lunch with his wife and himself in their jolly chambers in Buckingham Street, Strand, an invitation I was only too glad to accept, for Pennell was a character, and a virile critic of black-and-white drawing, in which I was naturally interested. When I arrived I found they had another guest whose name I did not catch—a somewhat untidily-dressed old man of rugged appearance and somewhat unkempt. The conversation be-

came very interesting, and was principally on Gothic architecture and art generally, and, piqued by Pennell's somewhat exaggerated and dogmatic criticisms, I launched out freely with the expression of *my* opinions —which at that time, at any rate, were crude—about Gothic buildings, and pictures, and indeed on art generally. Well, the old gentleman nodded approval frequently, and now and then in a funny sort of way tempted me on, and no doubt I said many foolish things. Then the guest rose to go and Pennell saw him out. When he returned his only observation to me was, "You d——d fool, do you know whom you have been talking to? Don't you know it was Whistler?" I certainly came out in a sweat, and I tried hard to remember whether in any of my remarks I had criticised Whistler's own work.

How full life was to me in those days! I seemed like a man wandering in a country of flowers, hardly knowing their names, being no botanist (or critic), and the perfume, the colour and the form were delight enough for me. My energies were renewed, my brain and spirit quickening in a world of delights. I had to pay the price in money worries and many anxieties and troubles of other sorts, but no price was too great for such years of happiness.

Early in 1898 my father met Professor Walter Ripman, and agreed to publish a series of books for the teaching of languages—more particularly Modern Languages—in a new way with special regard to phonetics. This system, called the Reform Method, has proved very successful. The series began with a list of about a dozen volumes, but to-day it consists of more than one hundred and fifty volumes. Nearly all of them have a regular and steady sale throughout the world, and some of them have been pirated in the United States, which seems to show their usefulness in teaching languages.

Having thus entered the educational publishing field my father began to issue Secondary school-books at net prices, but found it impossible to do so with Elementary educational books because the system employed by many educational authorities for the purchase of all educational supplies including books involved a heavy discount being allowed by the school booksellers who competed with one another by quoting in their tenders as large a discount as possible. In some cases the discount allowed by the school booksellers to the educational authority was larger than that given by the publishers. The bookseller made his profit by getting from the makers a very large discount on copy-books, stationery, chalks, desks, etc., which were listed at much higher prices than books when compared with the actual cost of production.

When some of our school textbooks, which had all been published at net prices, had been approved, and were being steadily added to the Requisition Lists of educational authorities, a difficulty arose, as the booksellers could not allow any discount from the published prices of net books. So in tenders for the contract to supply books and apparatus for the schools all net books were barred from the discount quoted by the contractor. The result was that municipal authorities gradually shouldered out net books from their Requisition Lists. Naturally our authors objected to the circulation of their books being so restricted and to the resulting loss of royalties, so, to our lasting regret, we were forced to alter the published prices of all our educational books from net to subject.

During 1899 Mr. Gollancz became enamoured of a series of primers which was being published in Germany entitled *Sammlung Goschen*. They were mainly written by university professors, and covered different activities in science and art, as well as most relative subjects. He thought if we could only get them into English they would make a fine helpful educational series. I considered carefully the idea and had one of the books translated. Then it struck me what a good thing it would be if we could make a long list of small

books on almost every subject, giving terse yet clear information such as one would look for in a great encyclopædia, but treated with greater fullness and with the advantage of being able to keep each one up to date. It would be a great undertaking, with every chance of success, if only I could get English scholars to help me. I asked all the advice possible, and at last decided to attempt it, using the Goschen series as a base. We obtained the consent of the German publishers for a payment on each volume, provided we took not less than twenty, and then we began to find English writers to help us. I was successful in some directions, but found it very hard to get what I wanted. One professor told me he would rather write three quarto volumes than a primer on his subject. To condense information of this sort is a fine art, and I think he was right. It is rarely that books like Stopford Brooke's primer on *English Literature* are produced, and it is rarely that they are satisfactory. But I was notably successful in some cases, such as Edmund Gardner's book on *Dante* which was everything that could be desired, Mr. Worsfold's primer on *Judgment in English Literature* which is invaluable, Dr. Koch's *Roman History*, Mr. Jenks's *History of Politics*, Professor W. Macdougall's *Physiological Psychology*, Sir William Ramsay's *Chemistry*, and others. We commenced to publish this series of The Temple Primers in 1900 and we have produced about fifty volumes, and as opportunity occurs we now and then add another, but the task is difficult and seldom can we get a suitable book.

During the years from 1897 to 1900 we had the happiest time in our Woodford house and garden. John had left us to live with friends near his work, but Hugh remained with us until his marriage in 1904. Two more girls were born to us, Lexie in 1898, and

Salway Lodge, Woodford Green

Ursula, our baby always, in 1901. But a shadow—the first since the loss of my first wife—began to creep over us. My eldest daughter Annie as she neared her twenty-first birthday began to show signs of weakness, which had come on so gradually that it was almost imperceptible. Every bit of effort began to distress her and any attempt to walk quickly up an incline brought on painful breathlessness and palpitation. We soon learnt that there was paralysis of one of the valves of the heart and knew that she would never recover. She was engaged to be married and it was pathetic to watch her efforts to appear in ordinary health. Indeed it seemed that we might have saved her for some years if she had ever realised her condition and acted upon her doctor's advice; but how could we tell her the complete truth? We could not take away from her the brief happiness that she was to have with her lover. By the time her birthday arrived she gave clear evidence that it was likely to be the last she would spend with us, and so it proved. It was a very pathetic and moving picture to see her sitting up in bed, surrounded by gifts sent by everyone who knew her, her cheeks flushed with perfect happiness, and we hardly knowing how to restrain our emotions. She had a perfect day, and we kept her festival in the garden a day or two afterwards whilst she sat amongst us like a tender little queen to receive our homage. She passed from us on 10 September, 1900, in her twenty-second year.

Oh the mystery of this passing from us of our children! It is hard to find any understanding of it or any consolation for loss, and yet who would say that lives are not purified and helped by such suffering? There is a passage in Dickens's *Old Curiosity Shop* which expresses all I would say,—which helped me at the time and helps me still. Someone has shown how

the lyrical prose lends itself to poetic form with altering scarcely a word, and I give it here in such shape, in the hope that it may comfort others as it comforted me:

O, it is hard to take
The lesson that some deaths will teach;
But let no man reject it.
For it is one that all must learn,
And is a mighty universal truth.
When Death strikes down the innocent and young,
For every fragile form from which he sets
The panting spirit free,
A hundred virtues rise
In shapes of Mercy, Charity, and Love,
To walk the world and bless it.
Of every tear
That sorrowing mortals shed on such green graves
Some good is born, some gentler nature comes.

I went to Chartres with Herbert Railton and Cecil Headlam to arrange about the illustrations for the book that the latter was writing which we published in 1902. There I experienced another great privilege that my work on this series brought to me. It was wonderful to stand in the marvellous cathedral that seemed to me the History Book of France, for as Mr. Headlam says, the church in Chartres dates back almost to the first century, and Pater declares that the cathedral is "a world to explore as if one explored the entire Middle Ages." Of its wonder of Gothic I must not speak or I should fill many pages, but to go over it all once more (I had been before with the Toynbee Hall party) was a profound satisfaction. The beautiful old town with its walls and bastions, and the wonderful spires of the cathedral, made you feel you were living in Qld France, though only some forty or fifty miles from Paris. Mr. Headlam had been identified with the series almost from the beginning, for he had written *The Story of*

J. M. Dent
From a photograph by Frederick H. Evans

Nuremberg in 1899, and his book on Chartres is one of the best in the series.

In the year 1900 the three-colour process gave us a more effective means of reproducing colour work in our books. It had often been tried in previous years, but by this year more progress had been made and a deal of crudeness eliminated by careful etching, which requires almost as great a skill as hand etching and even more attention to minutiæ in "biting." I have mentioned that my son John had begun business as a photo-etcher some years before, and he at once began to produce the best work possible in this direction. He had, of course, been our right hand in all our illustrating work, and I can honestly say that we owe to his skill the very best line work and half-tones in our illustrations.

One of the most delightful undertakings for which he made the blocks was an illustrated edition of Lamb's Essays, from drawings by C. E. Brock. Never did I begin an enterprise with so much fear and trembling —to attempt in any way to interpret or to realise the whimsical, delicate humour of Charles Lamb seemed almost a desecration, but the idea once having got into my brain would not be denied and I talked it over with Mr. Charles Brock, who decided to make the attempt. After all the old masters had not feared to tell the story of St. Francis, so I could not see why our modern artists should not attempt, to some extent at any rate, to make us visualise the time, the life and the work of St. Charles. I may say that Mr. Brock showed exquisite sympathy in his work, and it seems to me he was entirely successful and most helpful in depicting the environment and costumes of the times. We have only to look at the frontispiece to recognise how true to life is his Mrs. Battle. The success of the venture made us continue it with other essayists. We produced the

"Breakfast-table" Series of Oliver Wendell Holmes, the "De Coverley Papers" from the *Spectator*, some of Leigh Hunt's essays and Douglas Jerrold's, which were mostly illustrated by Mr. H. M. Brock.

I think it was in the autumn of 1901 that our friend Mr. Waller brought us a proposition for the complete works of Hazlitt, another daring venture, as indeed had been the Balzac, which was his proposal. There had been no attempt to get together the work of this most valuable critic, and we could but take the opportunity offered, especially as we had two discriminating and scrupulous editors, Arnold Glover and our friend Waller. Again we were fortunate in getting Mr. W. E. Henley to introduce the edition with one of the raciest and most characteristic of his essays. By the way, what a wonderful leonine sort of man was Henley, how he stood up to constant misfortune, ill-health and terrible suffering, and how big and important life seemed to him to the end. I went to see him about this piece of work and found him full of eagerness that we should do the works of Hazlitt well and thoroughly. To hear him damn the reviewers, both Scotch and English, of the early nineteenth century was exceedingly refreshing, though the language perhaps was somewhat too fiery and luminous outside Bohemia. It was good to meet such a man, for to him man's life was worthy of struggle and fighting; to be a man and a fighter, that was enough. What a glorious head he had—how terrible that the great body was almost helpless, yet it seemed built for herculean tasks, and a fit instrument for a great mind. Alas!

Two or three of the Hazlitt volumes had appeared when, about the year 1902, I conceived the idea of publishing a really complete edition of Lamb's Works. We knew, of course, of two or three extant editions, Hazlitt's, Fitzgerald's and Canon Ainger's, but none

of them was in any way complete, especially with regard to the Letters, and even if you had bought the three sets you would not have been able to say that you had all that Lamb had written. Besides there was a great opportunity to add to their value by illustrations —especially with regard to the Letters—with portraits of recipients, houses where Lamb and his correspondents had lived, reproductions of the illustrations of the children's books. There was also the opportunity to add Charles Brock's delightful drawings to the Essays and to the Plays, with portraits of the Elizabethan dramatists.

We were both fortunate and unfortunate in securing for our editor Mr. William Macdonald, perhaps the strangest personality it has been my lot to meet in this strange world. He was one of Mr. Henley's discoveries when he was editor of the *National Observer*, and intellectually he was quite worthy of the company of such a brilliant crowd of contributors as Henley drew round him. He was, however, almost painfully analytic in his criticisms, but splendidly appreciative of all literary values, though at the same time tremendously prejudiced in his dislikes and judgments. He suffered from some spinal malady and was only able to get about on crutches. His whole appearance impressed one with the idea of a life of great bodily torment, and at times his eyes seemed to express a longing to escape from his physical environment. But with all his impatience what a heroic soul after all, and what a triumph over the physical miseries imposed upon him! He had the full and intense joy of the lover of great literature, with a power of fine appreciation and analytical criticism such as few possess.

The enterprise proved most interesting. We were fortunate in discovering many of the very early editions, and by a curious accident found many unpublished letters in various parts of the country. Some time before we

had decided to publish Lamb's Works I had been told by my brother, who was a dentist in the north of England, that he had a patient who had informed him that he had a box of old letters given him by his father which he believed were valuable, and as he wanted money to send his boy to college he would be glad to sell them if they were worth anything considerable. His father, whose name was Ayrton, had, I believe, been connected with one of Gladstone's ministries, and he was the son of William Ayrton, a musician, and an old friend and correspondent of Lamb's. I remembered this story and got into correspondence with Mr. Ayrton, and at his invitation went down to see him in a little village in the North-west Riding of Yorkshire. He had a jumbled but interesting collection of letters and miscellanea. For instance, letters from Wordsworth, Mendelssohn, Lamb, and many minor celebrities of that time. I picked out all the Lamb and Wordsworth, and came home the happy possessor of many original documents for which I paid the sum of £300. Alas! I could not afford to keep them for reasons to be given later on.

About the time we had got fairly afloat with our plan a little book called *Lamb and the Lloyds* had been published by Messrs. Smith, Elder and Co. under the editorship of Mr. E. V. Lucas, which consisted of some very delightful letters written by Lamb to Robert and Charles Lloyd, and it included some which were of the utmost value from a literary point of view, especially those containing laudatory criticisms of Walton's *Angler* and the writings of Jeremy Taylor. An edition of Lamb's Letters could in no way be called complete without them, and I determined to get them if it were possible. I wrote to the publishers asking them for leave to use them in my edition, but they courteously replied that they had already sold their rights to another house and could do nothing in the matter. Here was

a sad let-down for me, who had determined that our edition should be the most complete of any that had appeared, and I seemed to be quite nonplussed.

Just at that juncture, however, I learnt that Messrs. Methuen were at work on an edition of the Works to be edited by E. V. Lucas, and I naturally supposed that as Mr. Lucas had edited the little book *Lamb and the Lloyds*, Messrs. Methuen were the "other house" to whom Messrs. Smith, Elder had sold the right to include the Letters in their edition, and I therefore could not approach them to allow me also to use them. What was I to do? The only way, as I then naturally thought, was to secure the original letters and print from them; but where was I to find them? The answer came almost at once. I had told my traveller, Mr. John Pollitt, of my difficulty and asked him quietly to make inquiries among the second-hand booksellers and men who dealt with original letters and find out if any of them had been offered the letters, or if they had heard anything about them. He did so, and strangely enough was able to tell me that a bookseller in Birmingham knew where they were, and believed they were for sale. It turned out that they were in the possession of a Mr. Steeds, manager of a branch of Lloyds Bank in that city who had married a Miss Lloyd a relative of the banking family, to whom the letters had been presented by a friend who thought they might be of interest to her. It appears they had been found in a box which had been used to support a table, the leg of which had been broken, and were bought as part of it at a sale. I immediately went to Birmingham and interviewed the bank manager who showed me the letters. I asked him if they were for sale, and on his answering in the affirmative I immediately asked the price and he told me he wanted £200. I asked him if he had retained any rights of publication

in them, and he told me he had parted with any rights in that direction to Messrs. Smith, Elder. I found out, however, that he had not obtained leave to publish them from anyone who had control of Charles Lamb's effects, and I therefore bought them and carried them off. On returning home I appealed to my lawyer for advice, and he agreed that if I printed them direct from the originals and no executor of Lamb appeared against me I was free to publish them, and counsel's opinion was taken to the same effect. So of course I included them in the first volume of the Letters.

The book had scarcely been published when I received a letter from a solicitor, not acting for Messrs. Methuen, who I supposed had bought the rights from Messrs. Smith, Elder, but on behalf of Messrs. Macmillan, who I discovered later had already published them in a limited edition which we had overlooked, and to whom the rights had been sold! Messrs. Macmillan had been very good friends of mine, as I have related in previous chapters, and it hurt me very much that I should be at variance with them in this way. I again consulted my lawyer, who remained firm in his conviction that we were legally right in publishing the letters, but he said if we could get the consent of Lamb's executor our case would be doubly sure. I wrote at once to Messrs. Macmillan and told them exactly how I stood, concealing nothing, and stating that I was willing to acknowledge that I published these letters by their leave, or to pay them a royalty if that was their wish. I offered them all the letters which I had myself that were copyright in exchange, but all was of no avail. I was to destroy my volume or go to law. All this was indeed painful as I have said, for Messrs. Macmillan were at that time my agents in America for all my publications, and it was indeed hard to have a quarrel with them. I had, however,

my public to serve. I had promised it as complete an edition as was attainable. I could not withdraw very valuable letters which I was informed I was free to publish, without a struggle and for fear of consequences.

Now many years ago, before I was a publisher, I had employed a traveller to sell my bound books to the booksellers. His name was Moxon, and it came to my mind that he might be a son of Moxon known as "The Poets' Publisher" because he had the great honour of publishing many poets of his day, including Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lamb, and later, Tennyson. Besides he was very intimate with many of them, especially with the Lambs, whose adopted daughter Emma he married, and their eldest son was young Moxon who worked for me. I had Charles Lamb's will examined, and discovered that after his sister Mary's death Mrs. Moxon became his residuary legatee, and further that Mrs. Moxon had willed to her son this legacy. Well, I found that Mrs. Moxon senior was dead, and that the man who had worked for me was now Lamb's literary executor. I traced his address, and he agreed to sell me all his rights. So I became myself the owner of any literary remains that were unpublished. Flushed with triumph and the joy of my new honours as literary executor to so great a man, I went to my lawyer and he assured me that the case was quite sound. I, however, informed Messrs. Macmillan of what we had done, hoping that they would at least agree to some compromise; but they would hear of nothing but complete surrender, and I was compelled to fight.

The case was heard, and though supported by very eminent counsel I was defeated, the judge holding the astounding doctrine that anyone finding an MS. after the death of the author, and publishing it before he was prevented by the author's executors, became the owner of the copyright. So here was I, the literary executor

of Charles Lamb, unable to publish his letters, or get an injunction to stop others doing so. At the advice of my counsel I appealed, but the judgment was upheld by all three judges, and I was compelled to destroy the book and pay the heavy costs. The case created a good deal of interest in the law journals, and I was urgently asked to carry it to the Lords, but no one offering to pay the cost of such a proceeding, I determined to bear the ills I already had. So now there are three or four important editions of Lamb's works, none of which is complete, or contains precisely the same matter, and no one can be said to have the complete works unless he buys a set of each one of them. Truly the law as I know it is "a ass"! The epilogue to this strange, eventful story is that when a new Copyright Bill was drawn up by a committee of which one of the Macmillans was a member, this idiotic law was amended.

I have thought it right to put down this story somewhat fully, for it reveals the defective manner in which some of our laws are made, another noteworthy instance being the drafting by a Departmental Committee appointed to prepare the Bill which was eventually passed as the Copyright Act of 1911, a measure which in my opinion was conceived more in the interests of authors and publishers, who were fully represented on the Committee, than in those of the wider public whose servants they were. The consequence is that the old term of copyright, which was fair and equitable —amounting to forty-two years or seven years after death, whichever was the longer period—was set aside, and now the author (and his publisher, of course) is entitled to fifty years after death of the author. Thus the works of a writer who died, say, at twenty-five would have scarcely more than fifty years' copyright, whilst an author like Tennyson or Browning living to eighty or ninety would have for his earlier works a copyright of

fully a hundred years. Hence the author (and his publisher) is enriched more than any other mental worker in the country, indeed has more entail than any other producer, for we cannot call landowners producers. Meanwhile the public are in the hands of the publishers, who perhaps for eighty years can charge what they please for vital literature without any competition, whereas if any kind of mental effort should be made free to the public at the earliest moment it should surely be literature. Yet it is kept from them four times longer than any mechanical invention which surely requires more strenuous work.[1]

I recall two incidents in connection with the trial of this action. The leading counsel against me, Mr. Scrutton, now Lord Justice Scrutton, in opening the case remarked that the action was concerning letters of Charles Lamb written to his friends the Lloyds of Birmingham, that had been lost for a hundred years and had very curiously been discovered in a house occupied by a gentleman who was a descendant of the Lloyds, and still more curiously his wife was also a descendant of the Lloyds. My leading counsel, Mr. Danckwerts, K.C., swiftly remarked, "Therefore, my lord, it may be said they were 'una-lloyd.'" In the course of his argument Mr. Danckwerts was interrupted by the judge on more than one occasion, much to his annoyance, and he was heard to remark *sotto voce*, "Damned old fool, he is against us—you will of course appeal, Mr. ——." This unkind remark obviously reached the ears of the judge not unintentionally.

[1] This statement requires some modification as under the last Copyright Act twenty-five years after the author's death anybody may publish any of that author's books in any form and at any price provided he pays to the author's legal representative a royalty of ten per cent upon the published price of all copies sold. Under this provision there has already been some competition among publishers who have issued cheap reprints of books by J. R. Green, R. L. Stevenson and other famous authors.

Shadows we are and
like shadows depart

CHAPTER X

Everyman's Library—A Great Idea—Scheme for a Thousand Best Books—"Everyman's" Editor—The Democratic Shilling—Garden City—The New Factory—Family Life—The Boy from New Zealand—I turn Photographer—An Amateur Archæologist.

"Everyman, I will go with thee, and be thy guide;
In thy most need to go by thy side."

IN 1904 and 1905 an idea, long cherished, took definite shape, and I began to set about developing it in earnest. I had felt that in England we had no library of classical literature like the French "Bibliothèque Nationale," or the great "Réclam" collection produced in Leipzig, of which you could buy a volume for a few pence. It is true indeed we had the monumental collection of Bohn, but the six hundred odd volumes included many heavy and dull translations from the classics, and were not representative of the world's literature of these times. Again, none of these volumes appealed to every kind of reader: the worker, the student, the cultured man, the child, the man and the woman. I thought if I could plan a series, dividing it into sections like History, Fiction, Biography, etc., and carefully make a scheme of non-copyright books, and then see whether I could add to it by translations of classics and foreign literature, I should be able to grasp something of the proportions of such an undertaking, and judge if it were possible with my limited capital to begin it with hopes of success. I knew that there

were promiscuous collections of popular reprints, some very well done as far as they went, as for instance the Chandos Classics, Macmillan's Globe Series, Morley's Library, but none covered the great field of English literature, let alone that of the whole world. Moreover, my idea was to publish a volume of five hundred pages for one shilling. The idea swelled into big proportions as I thought about it, and it enthralled me. I worked and worked at this thing, finding out all there was to be found out about materials and the manufacture, etc., obtaining the best prices I could, and getting at last an average price for all the books; and then I was able to lay before my son Hugh a practical working plan. He seconded me, but was wiser in forethought than I, in that he understood, or began to know what the getting together and keeping of such an enormous stock of books and filing them and keeping them in stock, and so on, would mean. Nevertheless, we began to look into the books that were at our disposal and see whether they could be published at the democratic price of one shilling, for there was no chance of success at that time if they were issued at any higher figure.

It seemed that the most propitious time for such a venture had arrived, for the copyrights of nearly all the great Victorians were falling in, such as Tennyson, Browning, Carlyle, Dickens, Huxley, Tyndall, and a host of others.

I looked at my capital, and for the first time in my life I found myself with a free sum of something like £10,000, part of which was my working capital, and so was not available to float such an enterprise. Still, I thought by subordinating my whole business in other directions for the time being to the one idea, I could start with a fair chance of success. Renewing my friendship with Mr. Ernest Rhys, who had already had a large experience in editing classics, I laid the

scheme before him. He enthusiastically approved, saying it was sure of success, and undertook the editorship, throwing himself vigorously into the scheme. Our councils of war were carried on during many arduous field-days, when we would begin early in the forenoon, lunch in the midst of a litter of books and papers, and not close till we had mapped out a forward list of some fifty possible volumes. Every author was discussed, weighed, and at times amicably fought over. The only thing that remained to find was a general title for the Series. We talked over many likely ones, but none seemed quite convincing. And then, just as we were beginning to grow anxious, one day Mr. Rhys came saying, "Eureka," and quoting the old lines from the play—"Everyman, I will go with thee, and be thy guide." Thereupon he suggested the title, now known all the world over—EVERYMAN'S LIBRARY.

I am afraid we both under-estimated the difficulties as we certainly did the cost, especially of the editorial work, but we only found this out as we developed our scheme and as the necessity of good introductions and translations of invaluable books became insistent. Indeed, if we could have known of the difficulties that afterwards arose, I might perhaps have hesitated. I am thankful we did not. My scheme eventually came to this. That I proposed to issue, indeed promised to issue, one thousand volumes definitely under twelve divisions, say, Poetry, Romance, Philosophy, Theology, Fiction, Children's Classics, History, etc.; that I should publish the first volumes fifty at a time, and I determined that the best advertisement of the idea and evidence of our good faith would be to issue in the first twelve months one hundred and fifty volumes! You see that this was a very bold scheme when you remember that we had to print at least ten thousand of each volume to cover the bare cost, and in many cases

—notably of Shakespeare and Dickens—as many as twenty or thirty thousand. For my fixed determination was to make it a democratic library at the democratic price of one shilling. We got to work at once. Everybody was very helpful, and a great many scholars gave us their best enthusiastically, and not only were scholarly introductions written for us by men like Lord Bryce, Dr. Lindsay, John Masefield, Hilaire Belloc, G. K. Chesterton (who edited the Dickens for us), Stopford Brooke, ex-President Eliot of Harvard, Professor Santayana, and a host of others, but many original pieces of work were offered to the Library, such as Dr. Lindsay's arrangement of the New Testament as it came written into the hands of the early Christians, new translations of Russian, French and German novelists. We demonstrated that we did not intend to shirk big things by publishing Grote's *Greece* in twelve volumes, and Hakluyt's *Voyages* in eight volumes, and we tried to gain confidence by doing this in the first three hundred volumes. The first fifty were published *en bloc* in February 1906, and were at once received very favourably, and by the time the second fifty were produced we were quite unable to keep up with the demand.

"Some further notes on the planning of 'Everyman'"—writes the editor—"will show the original range of the enterprise, and the spirit with which the indefatigable Chief carried it out. My own part in it is quickly told.

"In 1904 it had occurred to me that a resurrection of the old Camelot series (of which I was editor), on altogether larger lines, ought to be possible. Thereupon I made out a working list of books at the British Museum, and took it off to work over and recast during a holiday at Ventnor. Thence, after some revision, I sent this way-bill of the world's books to Mr. Dent, asking him if he would not like to be 'the new Napoleon of publishers'? A friendly reply, thanking me for the list, without any decisive word, yes or

no, did not seem to hold out much chance of developments. However, a further inquiry after the argosy brought a more promising letter asking me to call and see him. When I did so—he had by this time moved from his old quarters in Great Eastern Street to Bedford Street, Covent Garden—he told me he had already anticipated my idea, and was busily collecting books for it. Finally, after some pourparlers, he asked me to edit the new series.

"Needless to say the Chief was a most stimulating, if at times overwhelming, collaborator. He girded against every delay, every restriction—against 'free trade in books,' as he termed it—against copyright in all its extensions. Before the needs of 'Everyman' he felt everything ought to give way. It was an intriguing affair then, the plotting of a Spring or Autumn 'Fifty,' and a day spent over it was no bookmaker's holiday. Indeed he reminded one at times of that famous play-producer who wanted a bell for a scene in a tragedy and hearing one ring the hour of noon from a factory, told his manager to get it by hook or by crook, before the final rehearsal that afternoon.

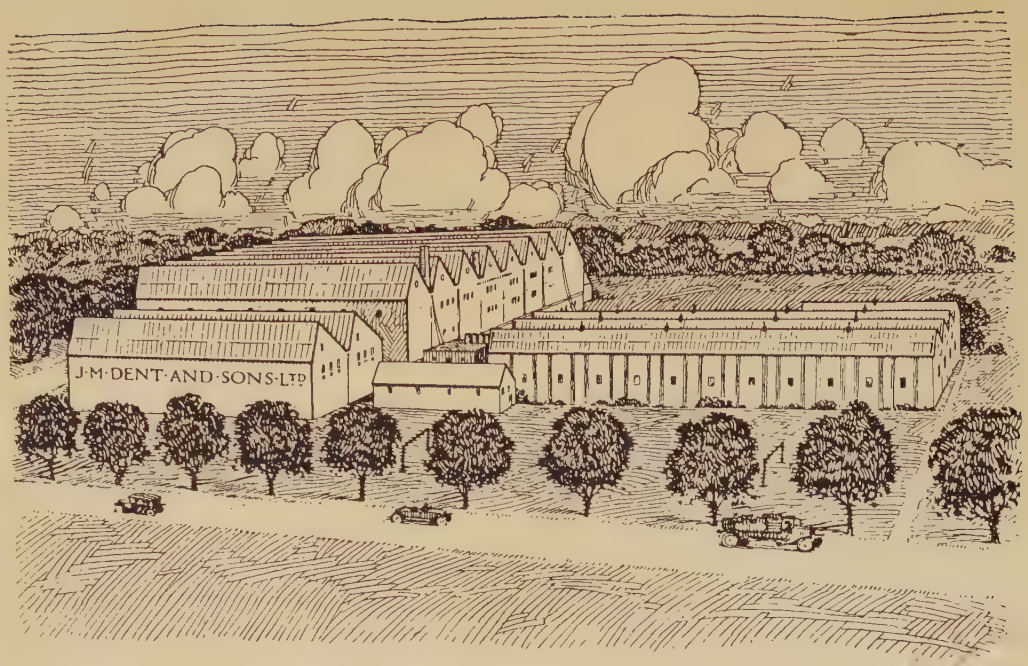
"Here is the record of one busy session as set down in an 'Everyman' agenda for 1909. The book is a dummy-copy of a volume in the Library, morocco-bound and gilt-labelled LE MORTE D'ARTHUR. This particular page is headed 'February Fifty,' and the provisional list runs to some nine pages or more."

The very success of Everyman's Library proved a great embarrassment to me. In my calculations for financing the series, I had counted upon using to some extent the money received from the sale of the first issue to produce the second, and that received from the second to produce the third, but instead of this I had to invest it all in reprints, which of course did not sell so rapidly, and the money became locked up. Now I had made a resolve at the beginning of this work that I would not borrow money for it. I had endured intense suffering from the old days of struggle, and decided never again to involve myself in the same obligations or so to straiten myself in means that I should have a weekly

distress to meet my undertakings. Yet here I was in almost the same mess again in spite of the great prosperity of my venture. As paper was the chief cause of the large capital outlay, I resolved to lay the matter before my paper-makers, showing them what large sums I had owing to me and the necessity of keeping the books in print. They were very good and helped me by extended credit, and I was able to get on for twelve months without much difficulty. But then more troubles arose.

I had hardly begun the enterprise before I discovered difficulties in the binding. I could not do the whole of the work in the premises recently purchased, and I had to give out the work to other binders, and naturally could not get the same attention that other publishers obtained, because the firms who undertook the work knew that I was not to be a regular customer, and they did our work only when it was convenient. We must then either give up binding and make it worth while for binders to compete for our work, or we must get premises large enough to do the whole of the thing ourselves. We had many an anxious discussion about this, as it had to be decided quickly or our enterprise would suffer very greatly. I strongly felt that if we did have to build a factory, it should be where we could give our employees a better chance to enjoy life than they could under the conditions in which they were working in London.

Our works at that time were situated near Bishopsgate, and the men and women had to travel—most of them—from far suburbs, which meant with walking and train an hour a day. We began work at 8 a.m., and many told me they had to leave home before seven in order to reach work in time, and they, of course, must have breakfast before that hour. They therefore had to wait from before 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. for their mid-



The Temple Press, Printing and Bookbinding Works, Letchworth, 1926

day meal. Too long for health, let alone comfort. Then we closed, unless we were working overtime, at 5.30 p.m., and as they could not get workmen's trains before six, at the earliest, the half-hour was not much use to them, and when they reached home between 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. and had their evening meal there was not much time for recreation or other interests. Now, I thought, if I could get them to some small town where they could live near their work, I could save them at least an hour and a half a day, and give time for a comfortable midday meal with their family, instead of eating at the bench or in uncomfortable coffee-houses. My son agreed with me in this matter, but feared that it would be a hazardous experiment while we were in the throes of issuing all the volumes we had promised. We looked about for a site, but could find none near London save what were worse in some respects than the location of our own factory.

About this time I chanced to meet at a lecture Mr. Thomas Adams, secretary of the new Garden City at Letchworth, in Hertfordshire, some thirty-four miles from London, and discussed with him the possibility of our going there. After a visit to the "City" itself, I went as carefully into figures and contingencies as my opportunities allowed, and eventually took five acres of land on which to build our factory. We began in August 1906, and the building was to be ready for us by Christmas at latest. This was made possible because it was planned to be a large one-story building with a glass roof, and very simple in its construction. It was indeed urgent that it should be ready not later, because the demand for Everyman's Library was becoming so great that if we could not get the books produced very quickly our enterprise would be destroyed. Alas for the vanity of human wishes!

We had arranged for a semi-public cutting of the first sod, because we wished our people to be keenly interested. As I had the happiness of having my eldest son with me from New Zealand just at this time, we decided to have a religious dedication which he conducted. This came off very pleasantly, and confirmed me in the altruistic desires with which I had started; but difficulties arose on every hand. The workmen were shown round houses in the neighbourhood of the works, but almost everybody was disappointed with the size of the rooms. "There wasn't room to swing a cat in any of them." "Couldn't get their furniture in," said their wives, and they must have a sitting-room. They had always had that, even when they had only three rooms. I respected this desire to have a retiring place where they could air their respectability, and it is all very well for intellectuals, who have had material comforts and perhaps found them stale, to talk about the simple life; but the workman's wife after struggling with housework and the children all day and every week has a right to some place in which she takes pride to receive her friends. It ended in my having to promise that I would erect at least enough cottages to house the older workers who had families, and to serve as a model for the builders of artisan dwellings.

Our function took place on Saturday. On Monday I was telegraphed for, and on my arrival at the site I was quietly told that up to that time neither the architect (who was an old schoolboy friend) nor the builders had taken the levels of the ground. They now discovered that there was a difference of nine feet six inches between one end of the plot and the other, and consequently we should either have to build up one end of the building to the level of the other, or we should have to make a basement underneath. This of course

complicated things terribly. How were we to get the building up before Christmas, and if not, how were we to go on with "Everyman," and what were we to do with the great basement some 200 feet by 120 feet, and how was the whole thing to be made to pay? There was again some anxious thinking, but we decided for the bold course and arranged to begin printing in the basement, which of course meant buying a printing plant. I now found myself involved in an outlay of some £20,000 for building and plant, and I had to carry on the great enterprise of "Everyman" at the same time. My £10,000 had long since disappeared, but money was beginning to come back, though of course it was inadequate for all the undertakings which grew out of one another with such rapidity. In spite of myself I was forced to get money from the bank, and I also had to appeal to my good friends the paper-makers, who, becoming somewhat alarmed at the amount of my credit, refused to extend it. Somewhat foolishly I was offended at this, for they had been very good to me. I told them that I must have the paper and that if they could not help me I must get it elsewhere, and I did so. Another firm of paper-makers very kindly granted me the necessary credit which enabled me to go on with all these things, and so I had not to seek very much help from the bank or elsewhere.

In all this story the reader will see how utterly dependent I have been on my friends and how little any man can really do off his own bat.

Through these years of happy strenuous life till 1901 our home life had passed on smoothly. Another baby girl had come into our life, making up our circle to ten boys and girls, George in New Zealand and Cissy in Heaven, while eight were at home. A large family, you will say. Well, it never seemed too large and it was certainly a happy one, but it was too large for it

to hold together long. Jack was the first to leave us to marry, and Hugh followed soon after, so we were left only with the smaller fry, the eldest being Paxton, who had soon to leave us to go to school at Wellingborough, and afterwards to Mill Hill and Oxford. Soon we had to part with Austen (the maker of laughter), when he went to Bootham School in York, and afterwards to Cambridge. Then Muriel went to a Friends' school at Sidcot, and we only had three little maids at home except during vacations; but in no way were we divided—no one had gone astray, and there was no black sheep to mourn over and to be anxious about. The little mother had them all in hand, a perfect Martha of household cares, but light-hearted as if she knew no responsibilities. Indeed but for a very serious illness of our child Olive, whose nervous system seemed to break down for a time, when we feared greatly for her life, the years since Cissy's passing had nothing but quiet happiness in them, filled with quiet hope for our children.

All the summer our dear old garden was a great joy to us, and generally happy groups of children and grown-ups filled it full of merriment. In 1906, the year "Everyman" was born, my son George (who was now vicar of Eltham) came to visit us for the first time from New Zealand, bringing with him his little daughter, and it made the year a kind of Jubilee. At the first sod-cutting ceremony at Letchworth he was delighted to meet after years of exile many of the old comrades he had worked with when he was a lad. He spent a happy time amongst us and a busy one, for he was called upon to preach at many churches in different parts of the country, and made us very proud when he was called to preach in the nave of York Cathedral to a great gathering of soldiers, who filled the whole space.

It was a time for me of intimate communion with

my eldest born, who had known all the suffering of the early days—he had gone out to New Zealand with little hope of recovery from lung trouble, and had now come home healthy and hardy, doing his level best for humanity. It was good to welcome him to a comfortable, happy household, and to talk over all the memories of his boyhood, to hear of his work and of his family and all the hopes he had of his new home, for he felt that New Zealand was in the van of civilisation and was solving most of the problems, both political and social, that this old country was still struggling with. How wonderful is the power of association, and more wonderful still the human memory! With my son beside me the past returned most vividly, and I lived over again the days of his childhood. I was only twenty-two when he came into the world, and the most trivial details came up in pictures before me, and I saw the little rooms in which we lived, the toiling, happy little mother so proud to have borne a son, and there was all the spare living and the fight for daily bread, the illnesses, the coming of his brothers and sisters, the tightening of the struggle, the death of our baby girl, the schooldays which happily were good, for though we lived in Hoxton we had a school of the first order close to our doors—the Haberdashers' Foundation.

The crowing of the little mother when her second son, year after year, won minor scholarships and never had any fees to pay at school! The self-denial of the same little mother from her small comforts that she might see her children more properly fed. Ah! if she could have dreamed that her eldest lad would some day "wag his pow in a pulpit," how gladly and how proudly would she have put her body on the altar, a living sacrifice, believing that she had attained the highest and the fullest of life in bearing such a son. This is not a book of confessions, but as I saw these

living pictures pass before me and saw my own part in them I had to blush and still have to blush for the contrast of my great selfishness with her perfect abnegation. Men talk about reparation—there is no such thing. A man never can by any power of his own cancel the effects of his sins, and the sins that follow him most remorselessly through life are not those of commission, but omission, the things he ought to have done and might have done, which he left undone.

But I am back again in the past. Retrospection is good for a man if in seeing his past weaknesses and sins he can gather strength to avoid them in the future. Longfellow had a motto in his long-forgotten novel, *Hyperion*, which has helped me: "Look not mournfully into the past! It comes not back again. Wisely improve the present. It is thine. Go forth to meet the shadowy future without fear and with a manly heart."

My son went back to New Zealand and to his work, leaving us comforted and happy about his future, and our life went on busily as before. As I write this it would seem as if I had been of a quiet serene nature, enjoying with even pulse the good the gods had sent me, and honestly, looking back, it feels as if it was so. But in fact I know it was far otherwise: outwardly I was restless, constantly irritable, discontented, superficially pessimistic; there was no calmness or quietude in my nature to all appearances. And yet I know for certain that the outer man did not represent the inner, and I hope that the figure of myself as here presented through the perspective of the years was more the real man after all. For I was not pessimistic or discontented except with myself, which perhaps coloured on the surface my attitude to other people. But deep down in me I know there was faith in mankind and a real thankfulness for a happy, busy life.

My chief recreation at this time was photography, which I had learnt from my friend Evans, another debt I owe him. It is a fascinating hobby, full of possibilities and happy chances, and the most absorbing of all sports. I had a little studio built at the end of the garden, and there I put my children to the torture at every opportunity, taking portraits at all ages and in all kinds of moods. I have them now made into lantern slides, and whenever I like I can have a family portrait gallery of all my children from babyhood up and with my pictures I can conjure up delightful memories of past times.

My camera drew me out into the woods and open spaces, and whether I had it with me or no I found myself making pictures or records at all times. I studied faces in the streets, watched the play of light and shade in defining character and beauty, and for all these years it has helped me in my observation and appreciation of all things beautiful. It drew me to the cathedrals and made me something of an archæologist, so that each of the great fanes of my country is a history book to me and tells to me its romantic story. Yes, life has been very good.

CHAPTER XI

"Most Favourable and Happy Speed"—The Everyman's Library Campaign—Scholars and Translators—A Complete Livy—Cary's *Dante*—The *Little Flowers* of St. Francis—Masefield's Hakluyt—Chesterton's Dickens—A Modern Language Series—Mediaeval Towns—Italian Adventures—The Temple Bible—America and "Everyman"—President Wilson—Miss Vida Scudder—Dutton and Co.—John Macrae—On the *Lusitania*—The Bancrofts—An Enfield Reminder—American Hospitality.

THE years that followed the launching of "Everyman" and our establishment at Letchworth were almost entirely absorbed in consolidating the effort and preparing new issues. We continued to add to the Library in batches of fifty volumes at a time, and this we were enabled to do by spreading the printing among several houses and the editorial work over many writers, striving as far as possible to get the right man to contribute the Introduction to each book. Meanwhile we were steadily getting new translations of foreign and classical literature, and scholars were liberal and sympathetic in helping us. Many scholars who had been making translations of their favourite authors were glad to have the opportunity of making them available in print. For example, Canon Roberts had begun a translation of Livy, and it has been a pleasure to put it into the hands of the people. American students, too, were generous in their offers of service, and we have been enabled to issue some works which but for their kindness would have been impossible. I must mention, too, the aid of my friend Edmund Gardner, who with infinite toil corrected in notes all the mis-translations of Cary's *Dante* and thus

made it a reliable, as it was already the most classical translation in English. Also my friend Thomas Okey translated anew the *Fioretti* of St. Francis and other works into English for the Library, Eugene Mason gave us a beautiful version of French twelfth-century legends, and many others for entirely inadequate pay did most helpful work for the public service, and to their scholarship I wish to offer my homage, and for their self-denying labours my most sincere thanks. Ernest Rhys made valuable compilations helpful to students, such as *A Century of Essays* in chronological order, and for the children a wonderful volume of fairy tales collected from all nationalities. Indeed with all its difficulties and anxieties the work went on joyously, while at the time of writing we have reached a total of 750 volumes, and one of my chief desires for longer life is to complete the thousand volumes which I promised at the beginning.

Of the many friendships this undertaking brought me, and the delightful discussions on the various branches of literature with scholars both in England and America, I could write many pages and never exhaust the theme. To recall the names of the men who have interested themselves in the Library from pure altruism would be a fascinating task, if only my memory would serve. Many have become famous: John Masefield wrote the Introduction to Hakluyt's *Voyages*, G. K. Chesterton wrote the Introductions to each of the novels of Dickens, Lord Bryce helped us to put together the speeches of Abraham Lincoln and wrote the Introduction, Stopford Brooke allowed us to use his *Golden Book of Coleridge*, May Sinclair edited the Brontës' works, my dear friend William Canton, most lovable of men, put his *Child's Book of Saints* at our disposal, my friend Arthur Burrell with enormous pains edited Chaucer and *Piers Plowman* and modified the text so carefully as to

make it possible for any man to read it without a glossary and yet lose nothing of the music.

Though the task of "Everyman" was very absorbing we were not altogether neglectful of other publications. To our Modern Language Series, commenced in 1898, many new school books were added, and we also issued volumes by modern writers. Indeed, besides the 152 volumes of Everyman's Library, we published in the year 1906 one hundred books in various departments of literature, though it is only fair to say that "Everyman" had been in preparation during the whole of 1905. No one can tell what a delightful absorption were these years of happy toil, and the days were never long enough. All holidays were curtailed, and something of the wonder and romance of literature seemed to have got into our blood. The days were spent in work, the nights in reading, nor can I remember any weariness resulting therefrom. Excitement and irritation were easily aroused when things did not go right, but eagerness and happiness went hand in hand, and a sense that it was not all for the mere sake of business and of money-making, though that too had its attractions and interest deep enough, no doubt, the added pleasure was a feeling that in earning our living we were doing really useful work.

During all these years of busy life somehow I managed each year to get to Italy. I had continued the Mediaeval Towns, and produced many books on Italian art and literature, and there was always business to arrange which gave me my excuse. Although I could never stay more than a fortnight or so, these visits were a great delight, if not much of a recreation. Some of the books gave me infinite pleasure in the making, such as Mrs. Ross's great book on the Florentine Villas and Miss Duff-Gordon's book (by this time she had married Mr. Waterfield) on Rome. I spent a delightful week

in Rome with the author and her husband—who was an artist and was illustrating his wife's book—wandering through the great city looking for subjects to draw and to paint, driving to Tivoli to see the great falls—alas! even at this time harnessed to the making of electricity for the great city—coming home down the great Appian Way in the moonlight, with the fireflies flitting everywhere, and clattering into Rome when everybody had gone to bed.

Then again with my friend Okey at Venice when he was busy with his great book. What a cicerone he was, knowing every nook and corner and every picture in Venice. Or again with the artist O. F. M. Ward to find subjects for his pictures; going out with Madame Wiel to Verona and listening to its historic romances; and again with my dear friends Ella and Dora Noyes to Ferrara, with memories of its dukes, poets and painters. My craft you will see added zest to my enjoyment, for were not all these wonders to be printed and pictured in books of my producing!

Turning back to publishing again, I have forgotten to mention that in the year 1901 I began to issue, under the editorship of Oliphant Smeaton of Edinburgh, the Temple Bible in a somewhat similar fashion to the Temple Shakespeare, each book treated in a separate volume as a piece of complete literature, and each book carefully edited by competent scholars. It included not only the canonical books of the Bible, but the apocryphal of both the Old and New Testaments. I hoped that it would be as popular and as helpful as the Shakespeare had been, for there was great need of such a treatment. It seemed to me that it was the only way to read the various books intelligently and without prejudice. Alas! the public did not appreciate my point of view, and it has had but a moderate success. I am afraid the use of the Bible as

a book of doctrine or a book only of sacred and inspired truth (after all people do not like facing the truth) has blinded men's eyes to its supreme value as literature—literature which we English have made so completely our own in its marvellous translation—that to know it well is to know English at its best and highest. To those who have been brought up on it, it gives a purer and nobler diction and an elevation of thought, and makes a standard by which to test all other reading.

In 1901 we began an edition of Thackeray's novels in twenty-four volumes, and the *raison d'être* was that it should be a large-type edition and have for the first time a series of illustrations right through. Thackeray had of course himself illustrated some of the humorous books, but no artist had consistently pictured the characters, as a help to visualise both the persons and their surroundings. I again called upon my friend Charles Brock, who had added so much to our enjoyment of Lamb's *Essays*. He went to work with a will, enjoying his task immensely, though I am afraid the long series of drawings relating to one author must have palled upon even his enthusiasm before his task was done. The work was undertaken in conjunction with Messrs. Macmillan and Co. of America, and we made an arrangement with Messrs. Smith, Elder and Co. to publish the complete prose works, whilst we engaged the grandson of Douglas Jerrold, Mr. Walter Jerrold, to write a bibliographical introduction to each book. The work gave me great satisfaction, because I could for once ignore economies and indulge in good type, good paper and delightful drawings.

In 1909 I went again to the United States, where I had much to do in connection with Everyman's Library. I had begun to hope that the Library might become universal so far as English-speaking peoples were concerned, and I went round among librarians and

scholars seeking to know from them what books were most needed for American students and readers. I was heartily received everywhere and obtained the help of many professors in the choice of books and also for writing introductions.

One whose help I sought was President Wilson, at that time President of Princeton University. I also met ex-President Eliot and had lunch with President Lowell of Harvard. Dr. Eliot consented to write an Introduction to Spencer's *Education*. Some men at Columbia University also helped me, Professor Trent and others. One of the most delightful was Dr. Santayana, Professor of Philosophy at Harvard, who welcomed me most warmly and undertook to write the Introduction to Spinoza; indeed wherever I went I met with the utmost sympathy and help.

It was at this time I first went to stay with my friend Miss Vida Scudder, and a friendship was cemented which had begun many years before and which has been to me one of the most precious I have made in all my lifetime. She is a ripe scholar with a great and intense enjoyment in all true literature, classic or modern. She is a whole-hearted reformer, and was one of the first to welcome the Settlement movement and to found one in New York. Deeply religious, she yet sees the great lack of the Church in fulfilling its mission, and labours on the platform and in the press to bring it to a sense of its high calling. She is a good linguist, knowing the Classics, French, Italian and German, but above all she is deeply versed in mystical literature, both mediaeval and of the Renaissance. These are mental attainments, but of her spiritual life and for the help I have derived from it I cannot find adequate expression. Busy—too busy, for her literary work suffers—in fighting for a higher Christian Socialism, yet she finds time for contemplation, and loving the

world is never of it. That I hope is no paradox. Much of joyful intercourse have we had, for we are both optimists, and though we often disagree yet the stimulus I get from her letters, and our talks in America, have been a constant help to me.

I think I have mentioned that Messrs. E. P. Dutton and Co. had arranged with me to take part in the venture of the Everyman's Library to the extent of two thousand of each of the volumes as they were issued, and our relationship had become very close. We had for long had a business intimacy which I was glad to make stronger, and I may say here that though we have been doing business together for some twenty-five years we have never had the slightest disagreement or even misunderstanding. Though Messrs. E. P. Dutton and Co. have never had any part in the initiation or choice of the volumes for this Library, they have accepted loyally each book as it appeared and helped to sustain this enterprise, which we both believe is one of public service. John Macrae, who has long been my affectionate friend, and who for very many years has been the life and soul of Dutton's business, is as enthusiastic as we are in building up this great Library, and many a night and day have we discussed it. Then there is that wonderful old man, the founder of the firm, Mr. E. P. Dutton, at the time of writing some ninety years of age, hale and hearty and as plucky as ever.

I must not forget another friend whose work has always had a great charm for me, Miss Florence Converse, who is now the sub-editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*. She had been a pupil of Miss Scudder's at college and now is her fast and devoted friend. Both these ladies are Red Flag Socialists, and though we have much in common I certainly am not a Socialist, and many a hot battle have we waged over this question, but we have always in the end agreed to differ.

By the by, one of the "accidents" of publishing may well be related here. Miss Converse wrote a little book called *The House of Prayer*, which gave in somewhat allegorical form the inner meaning of our Church of England liturgy. It is a very beautiful book, but attracted no attention either in America or here, until a Mrs. Green having read it and, understanding it, pointed out to a bishop that this was the very book they had looked for. The bishop was of the same opinion and wrote to some paper about it, with the consequence that the book has now sold over twenty thousand copies. I have not had many of these "accidents" in my career, but I must speak of another to show how little we can gauge our fortunes or know the public wants.

I have spoken of Miss Duff-Gordon who married a Mr. Waterfield and they were to do me a book on Rome, Mrs. Waterfield writing the book and he illustrating it. I went to her house to discuss it, and there met Mr. Waterfield's sister, who had brought some drawings of gardens for me to see. I was very keen about the book on Rome, and though the drawings pleased me I hardly hoped to make a book of them successful. Still, they were too good to let go, and I arranged that if Miss Waterfield could get some expert gardeners to write on garden colour I would take the book. Well, the two books were published in successive years, but it was the *Garden Colour* that proved attractive, and it went through several editions. This by way of parenthesis, as it has nothing whatever to do with America.

In going over on the ill-fated *Lusitania* I met a Mr. John Bancroft with whom I soon became on friendly terms, and most earnestly he invited me to visit him at his house at Wilmington, and as I had to go to Philadelphia I took the opportunity to spend the week-end with him. He is a member of a family who have long

been known as textile manufacturers, with large mills for dyeing and finishing cloth. It turned out that he was a cousin of the John Bright family, and his ancestor had gone out and settled there a hundred years ago.

During the evening his daughter and I talked about architecture in England, and I began to tell her that to study it rightly one of the first things she should see was Waltham Abbey, one of the earliest of Norman churches. "Oh! I have seen that," she exclaimed, "while I was staying at Enfield." I was surprised to hear she had stayed there, for I had always thought of Enfield as a manufacturing suburb where we made rifles and other things like bicycles; she had, however, seen the abbey. After a while I happened to say that I was seeking a house with a good big garden, and it was difficult to find one just to my mind. "Oh!" she said, "I know of a beautiful old house and a perfect garden that is just being given up by a popular preacher, and it is really a beautiful place." "Where is it?" I said. "Enfield," she replied. That, with the "popular preacher" thrown in, damped down any ardour she had aroused in me, and so the subject closed, but you will have the sequel in the next chapter.

At Philadelphia I met many friends whom I had known on my last visit some seven years previously, and I was most kindly welcomed again, for there is no hospitality so free as American, and it was exceedingly delightful to enjoy it once more.

I returned with plenty of work to do and any amount of arrears to pull up, but it was a most exciting and energising experience.

Hill Lodge, Enfield

CHAPTER XII

From Woodford to Enfield—House Hunting—November Impressions—A Delightful Garden—The Old Tithe Barn—St. Elia's Cypress-tree—Girls and Boys—The Boy at Oxford—Happy Days—"My Son Hugh"—Garden City—Enlarging the Letchworth Factory—(Editor's Notes and Comments).

WHEN I returned from America my wife and I began seriously to look for another house. We had had many happy years at Woodford. Our youngest children were born there, and our daughter Annie had left her pain behind her and had gone forward on the Great Adventure. We had made some happy friendships, and the garden had been to us a great joy. But somehow the atmosphere had changed—buses and trams began to clang past the house, ne'er-do-well shops were built next door to us, and a feeling of sordid towniness threatened our seclusion. I wonder in what this desire of set-apartness originates: it is always more prevalent among the well-to-do folk, and I am afraid there is a large admixture of egotism with the desire for quiet and the beauty of the country. After all, man is a gregarious animal, and cannot bear to be away from his fellows for long—if it is only that he may have an opportunity, as the old Scotch bailie said, "to object." Times are changing, moreover, since the war and the still more terrible peace, and men perhaps will now more quickly learn to love their fellows, and to remember, too, the old saying, that he that would be greatest among you let him be your servant.

Whatever mixed motives moved us we determined to

leave. I was sixty years of age, and had six well-grown children at home who demanded a lot of room. Though we were not naturalists yet my wife and myself had a passionate love for nature and open-airness, and we were determined that whatever else we got, the garden should be at least as spacious and beautiful as the one we were leaving.

So we set out on our quest with sheaves of house-agents' orders to view, and drove over two districts in the farther northern suburbs, seeking continually for what we could not find.

We had almost exhausted our orders to view when I remembered my talk with my American friends about a house at Enfield with a large garden and meadows. "Well," I said, as we got into the car after looking at a house that my wife said she would not live in because of its too perfect isolation, "we may as well look at this house, which I am pretty sure is the one the Bancrofts talked of. It is only three or four miles from here and is on the way home."

We arrived to find it walled around to the height of nine or ten feet—secluded enough—and the first look of the house did not prepossess us, as the shutters were all up for the winter. We called for the caretaker, however, for we did not like to give up our last hope. He opened the door into a hall, small and cramped, and we almost gave up in despair; but he took down the shutters from the doors that led into the garden, and then, though it was bleak and chill November, we almost made up our minds before we looked farther. For never such a garden had come within our hopes or dreams, and we have never seen one since that we have envied or that could vie with this we so loved. We told the gardener to find the owner, and we stood on the doorstep or walked round the garden until he came; the house was within our means and we took it

before we left the place—for who would have risked losing such an Elysium, as it seemed to us? Were there not wonderful trees not to be seen in any other garden—deciduous cypress, hanging poplars, tulip-trees, weeping-ashes, glorious oaks? And the spinney—quite a furlong of it, where we could go in the early morning and see the sun light up the trunks of the beech-trees with such tenderness that they seemed like mothers awaking from dreams of motherhood; and in the evening see the sun set among the Scotch firs, drawing out that marvellous colour never yet put upon man's palette. Moreover, had we not tradition and honour? Why, there is the wonderful tithe barn that might have had miracle plays in it in the fifteenth century. Certainly it was there when good Queen Bess reigned. And then there is a wonderful little chamber over an arch where it is boldly declared that the greatest of highwaymen, Dick Turpin, hid from his enemies. And again, was there not a deciduous cypress under whose wide-spreading branches a saint was said to have many a time drunk tea, though, alas! it is known that he would have preferred the shelter of a top floor off Fleet Street and the drink of a more potent quality. For the saint was Charles Lamb of pathetic and heroic memory. We were always making new discoveries—what was now used as a scullery had been a combined brew-house and bakery, and the old oven and the vat were still there; bits of Queen Anne architecture and neat queer little outhouses, the purpose of which we could not guess.

We moved in at the end of April when the spring blossom was in full blow, and what a glory and what a promise of a great fruit harvest—yes, I had reached the heights of my worldly ambition it seemed, and I felt that it was well worth working for fifty years to attain. Here we lived many years, and each year loved it more,

and I have honestly wished that everyone could have a place as beautiful to live in.

Paxton, our eldest boy, had gone to Oxford, and spent much of his first vacation putting the lawn (where we could set up our tennis nets) in order by cutting and rolling, and we had the joy all the summer of seeing its lovely green sward, backed by the wonderful trees, overrun with girls and boys in varied-coloured dress—making a picture that gladdened our hearts. Of course this had its drawbacks as all worldly delights have. Our friends found it hard to get at, for we were a mile from any station, and it was a two-hours' journey from the West End, Hampstead and other suburbs; but we had plenty of bedrooms and were hardly ever without guests. It was a long journey of an hour and a quarter to my office—but we had full compensation for it all. I linger naturally over these happy days before the shadow of the Great War threw them into more wonderful relief — for they were years when no sorrows came to break up their calm, and were perhaps the happiest years we have lived.

My son Hugh had settled in a jolly house and garden at Letchworth and was able to give an eye to the factory, and I went there every week in our little car, my wife generally accompanying me. We started early in the morning, arriving soon after 9 a.m.—a distance of about thirty miles—and I was able to return to town and get to work about 2.30 p.m., so putting almost two days' work into one. The work at Letchworth was interesting and hopeful. Our people who had come from town had taken kindly to country ways and many had gardens in which they took great pride. They formed a Gardeners' Club, and between the bookbinders of W. H. Smith and Son and our own people there was keen competition as to who should carry off most prizes—for each year we had a Flower and Vegetable

A Corner of the Warehouse at the Temple Press

Show and made a festival of it. The men, too, took to long bicycle rides over the country—for the cockney is a very adaptable person—and some seemed not to hanker after city life again, though others came and soon left, for they missed the music-halls and the little excitements. Especially was this so among the women, and we retained but few of those who worked for us in London.

In this year of 1909 the place began to be worthy of being called a Garden City, for during the summer it was gay with colour everywhere, but the First Garden City Company, in their anxiety to make ends meet, let sites for factories within areas which in 1906, when I took our site, I understood would be set apart for an agricultural belt and residential quarters. The Company turned into factory sites and gave permission for building on the only piece of land which separated us from Baldock by less than half a mile, and thus reduced the agricultural belt at that point—with the consequence that many of the town working people are drifting there into unsanitary lodgings and soon the two places may become one; and so that part of the Garden City may drift into a slummy place and lose some of its charm and individuality.[1]

We had enlarged our factory by building a complete printing office and using the basement for our warehouse, for "Everyman" required an immense deal of storage; our numbers had increased to nearly four hundred workers, two hundred of which, perhaps, were women. We had to gather girls from all the villages round, and many of them had to walk three or four miles to their work; the supply of women's work has always been our difficulty—for one thing the wages paid them are not sufficient for them to pay for lodgings.

[1] On reference to the first "town plan" of Letchworth, dated April 1904, I find that this piece of land is there set apart for factory sites.

We could not alter this to any sufficient degree, as our work was competitive, yet we had always paid the recognised London rates for women's work, which were substantially higher than the country rates, though our factory was in the country area. I may say here that one great good will arise from the war, and that will be the recognition of the value of women's work and that it will be better paid. We had found many difficulties arising from our distance from town—in transport, in getting workers to come down, and in many other ways—but these were fully compensated for by the better surroundings and comfort of our people. Each Christmas we had our Festival, and it was as much as we could do to find a place big enough to feed in, and jolly times they were. One regret I have always had in going to Letchworth. Before I had always kept in touch with the bookbinders—my own craft—and with some of whom I had worked at the bench; some have been with me more than forty years, and my forewoman, Miss Kimber, has been with me ever since I began business. This intimacy of relationship has not been kept up, and I am sorry for it, because it is a wonderful help when there is sympathy and unity of aim between employer and worker.

Since 1921—when the above was written—further buildings have been added to the works: a storehouse for unprinted paper, a moulding and stereotyping shop, and a large warehouse for printed sheets. Much reorganisation and rearrangement of machinery and stock has been carried out to the advantage of the firm, and for the greater benefit and comfort of the workpeople. The whole place impresses one more as a house where work is being well done, if not with downright enjoyment yet with some interest, rather than as a workhouse or penitentiary with its air of compulsion and suspicious supervision.

The welfare of the people who worked for the Chief, whether in factory or office, touched him closely, not only as a com-

munity but also individually. He believed in the influence of environment and seized the opportunity of moving the works from London to Letchworth to give his workpeople plenty of air and light in the new factory. He was also anxious that they should have the advantage of the better housing conditions in Letchworth, and even built two dozen cottages for the best of the men who came from London. They were let at rents which would just bring in the average annual expenditure before the war, but since the war they have shown a loss as the result of the operation of the Rent Restriction Acts.

He tried to interest them in good pictures by hanging on the walls of the binding department original drawings and good reproductions of famous pictures, but little interest was taken in them. He gave a small library for the workers and the staff which was used for a short time, but as the novelty wore away the interest in it declined so that twelve months later it was forgotten.

He always felt much responsibility for his workpeople, and many have been the occasions when stock was bound up in advance or a new publishing scheme evolved to keep the people fully employed so that they could take home their full wages at the end of each week. The people themselves never knew how often this happened, but I am sure they believed in and appreciated his care and forethought in these directions.

He welcomed the Trade Union movement and the reduction of the working week to forty-eight hours, but regretted and as far as possible resisted the tendency to reduce or control the output of the workers. Many men still credit the false notion that the less work they do the more will be left for their less fortunate unemployed fellows. This erroneous idea he fought all his lifetime and some of our people do now see, from the practical example of the rise and progress of our own firm, that the greater their output per day the greater the amount of work seemed to follow from some corner of the globe. He disliked great combinations of men or masters, as in their dealings the old personal relationship between master and men—in his own case almost paternal—was displaced by deputations and committees who in their discussions and bargainings are too apt to forget the human factor. He always preferred to deal directly with his men, and in later years

became a little impatient with trade union negotiations. At the same time he admired the work done by the trade unions for the betterment of conditions and wages of the workers, although to him it was lamentable that the leaders seemed to set up a purely material standard which he felt in the end would make for selfishness and jealousy amongst the different unions themselves.

He looked forward to, and greatly enjoyed, the annual factory party which was held at Letchworth early in each New Year. He loved to see all the people together—young and old—the new apprentice as well as his first apprentice who began the career of a bookbinder with him fifty years ago and who is still an active member of the bindery. It was a pleasure for him to talk to them of his early days and his struggles to found a business, of their own part in its growth, of the men and women who had worked for him and had passed away. He would tell of their sterling qualities, of their faithfulness and belief in him as an employer and a producer during the best part of his lifetime. Then he would remind us of the little kinks and foibles in our own characters, to the great amusement of us all, and in some cases to our great advantage, for it spurred us on to prevent our failings—big or little—from hindering the steady growth of the business which had been the greater part of his life-work, and which he made us feel was going to be the most effective and perhaps the best part of our own lives.

ALDINE HOUSE, BEDFORD STREET, LONDON

From the drawing by E. Keynes Purchase, the architect of the building

CHAPTER XIII

Expiring Leases—A Change of Habitat—Crossing Bedford Street—The New Site—Building Costs—The Awful Burden of Rents and Rates—Aldine House, No. 2—A Pleasant House-warming—A New Enterprise: *Everyman's Journal*—Dr. Sarolea—Some Distinguished Contributors—The Collection Gallia—Disappointments and Difficulties — Our Paris House — December 1915 — Two Disappearing Managers — Brian Rhys as M. le Directeur — A French Translation of Shakespeare.

IN 1910 we discovered that our lease of 29–30 Bedford Street would expire early in 1912, and therefore we had once more to look out for premises. We tried to come to terms with the landlord, but we could not arrange matters, especially as we had outgrown our warehouse room. We made a thorough search in the district for adequate premises, but we could find nothing in the neighbourhood within our means. Everyman's Library was a heavy burden to carry, for to work the list of volumes we required to keep a stock of two million copies, which involved large shelving space. Many months were spent in deciding what to do, and as there seemed no alternative we arranged to build again—a most desperate proceeding after our experience at Letchworth in erecting the factory and cottages.

The site of our present building belonged to the Duke of Bedford's estate, and after much negotiation we leased the land at a stiff ground rent. I believe this was an increment of more than double the previous rent, for which the landlord had done absolutely nothing. If this increment had come into the hands of the municipality it would have almost cleared the place of rates. It is most strange that even democratic Governments like our own and America should allow this awful

burden on the people to continue. It is even worse in New York than in London, which is surely shameful enough.

It was, however, good to be able to have our premises built as we desired them, and I had great fun and interest in getting the architect, Mr. Purchase, to give me what I wanted, and at last I was quite satisfied with his plans, though the cost of putting up such a building was enormous. Again this called for more capital, which we had to set to work to earn, yet we could not see any other way out if we were to carry on Everyman's Library. We were fortunate, however, in letting to the London County Council nearly all the upper part of the building, so that our interest and ground rent were very largely accounted for, and by debiting ourselves with our own rent we were able to raise a fund to pay off the principal.

The building is a great pleasure to me. I had my own way with regard to the façade—a blend of Elizabethan and Queen Anne styles—and I cannot help feeling that it is at once modest and dignified. It is also self-contained, for we have a well supplying water to the whole of Aldine House, passenger and goods lifts, and the building is heated throughout.

When we opened it we called our friends together and the reunion was very enjoyable. I felt as if I had come to a definite housing for my business, that my sons might carry on during all their lives and never need fear disturbance, and this again was a great satisfaction to me.

We opened the premises in November 1911, and had begun to settle down and feel the comfort of it when I had a quite unexpected collapse—heart failure our local doctor called it—which put me on my back for some weeks. It was the first illness which had confined me to my bed for more than a day or two since I was

a child. It was nearly the end of February 1912 before I was able to get to my work again, but I must confess I could have returned earlier, and I have always felt that the doctor exaggerated the gravity of the case. It, however, gave me the opportunity for a quiet holiday with my wife in Devonshire, and it was good to forget the turmoil of the battle for a little while.

I was soon in the mêlée again, and a new enterprise took form and shape in 1912. I had long wanted a journal which should help people to know the value of literature in everyday life, not a critical journal such as the *Athenæum*, or other literary journals, but one of an interpretative, appreciative character, such as would tempt the reader to explore. It was not to be confined to English literature, but to be cosmopolitan. It was also to keep before its readers the great store of classical literature of the past by including appreciations of old masters written by well-known literary critics. These were to be its main objects, but touch was to be kept with everyday life in a résumé of the week's events with criticism thereon. There were also to be articles from foreign savants in literature and art, etc., but the chief idea was to foster a taste for books among the proletariat, and bring a sense of culture and refinement into the homes of the people. Mr. Rhys and I discussed the idea time and again and we got out a dummy copy, but I could not satisfy myself nor alight upon an editor sufficiently versatile and cosmopolitan for my purpose, so the idea lay dormant for a year or two. But in 1912 I received a letter from Dr. Sarolea saying that he had some ideas which he thought could be worked out best by our house, and asking me when I was next in Edinburgh to stay with him and talk them over. As I had to pay very frequent visits to Edinburgh to see my editor Mr. Smeaton and the printers, I took the next opportunity to call upon

him and hear what his ideas were. Almost the first thing he spoke about was his desire to edit a literary journal! I found that our ideas were very much on all fours. Dr. Sarolea was a Belgian and at the head of the French department of the University of Edinburgh. He was a linguist and in close touch with the Continent, and was able to get contributions from scholars and *littérateurs* of several nations. He was well versed in English literature and continental politics, and, moreover, was a fluent writer with some experience in journalism. He seemed to be the ideal editor for my purpose, and soon we had arranged to start the enterprise at the earliest opportunity. We were to use the title *Everyman* and thus connect it with our great Library, and it seemed as if we should not only produce a profitable journal, but do a fine piece of work that would help and attract the people to the study of great literature.

The venture was launched in October 1912, and began its career under the best auspices. The first number reached a circulation of some 110,000, and had among its contributors distinguished men: Alfred Russel Wallace, G. K. Chesterton, Norman Angell, George Saintsbury, Henri Mazel, Sir E. Shackleton, Principal Whyte, Monsignor Benson, John Masefield, Emile Vandevelde, Hilaire Belloc, Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, Rudolf Eucken, Sir Sidney Lee. I was delighted at its success, and for a few weeks the editor worked hard and there seemed hopes of founding a really permanent and valuable piece of work. Owing to causes which need not be particularised there was constant friction between the editor and myself, so that in April 1914 we agreed that he should buy the paper from the firm and conduct it on the same principles which inspired its start. I need not say how great a disappointment this was to me.

THE SALON OF ALDINE HOUSE

I had had great hopes of doing a real service, and I must confess, too, that I had built something on having an influence on public opinion and having a voice in public affairs for good.

But the *Everyman* paper was not the only matter for which we engaged Dr. Sarolea: he was to edit a series of French books to be called the Collection Gallia, which was to include classical and modern French literature. It was to be marketed in France, and for this purpose we made an arrangement with a French house to act as our agents, and to take the responsibility of the warehousing and sale of the Collection. As the result of negotiations with French authors we secured several books from well-known men, and chose carefully the classical side of French literature, and soon had twenty volumes on the market. But again there was trouble because the versatility of our editor led him into other new ventures while we were occupied with incompleted arrangements for the paper and new series. I think I was to blame, perhaps, in accepting his services, seeing that he was already engaged at the university as head of the French department and was writing a book and contributing to different papers at the time he undertook the editorship of *Everyman*. But he assured me that he was so well stored with his constant reading, had such a close touch with journalism, that it was quite possible to carry on all these things at the same time.

We launched the first volumes in the summer of 1913, and the agent was successful in distributing a large number *en dépôt*, that is to say on sale or return, and we hoped that he was making a success of the venture; but we found that though the booksellers had the books, they were not disposing of them quickly enough to enable the agent to meet his engagements with us, so again we were in trouble. To shorten a

not very interesting story, it ended in winding up our business with the agent and in December 1915 opening an office of our own in Paris. Alas! again we were plunged in difficulties, for the man whom we engaged as manager turned out to be dishonest and was summarily dismissed, leaving the house with a heavy claim against him. In January 1917 we appointed in his place his assistant, who was an Englishman, but he, having exposed the manager, followed his example, and within a year, having collected a large sum of money, decamped in the spring of 1918, leaving us almost helpless. In those days it was difficult to get to Paris, so for a time we left our French affairs in the capable and friendly hands of Mr. Edmund Heisch, the accountant whom we had engaged to audit our books. He kept the business going with the help of a lady bookkeeper and typist until we engaged Mr. Brian Rhys—son of the editor of Everyman's Library—to manage the business in October 1919.

Under his care, among other schemes was launched one of signal interest—a complete translation into French of Shakespeare's plays, worthy of the original. Each play was to be entrusted to a translator of literary distinction, who made it his choice, and who would endeavour to capture the spirit and letter of Shakespeare's English. As in the Temple *Dante*, the translation was to be given, page for page, with the original text confronting it. The prospectus itself is a document worth preserving:

COLLECTION SHAKESPEARE

"La 'COLLECTION SHAKESPEARE' offre une solution, nouvelle en France, du difficile problème que pose la traduction de l'œuvre Shakespearienne.

"Profitant du renouveau que le vers blanc connaît chez nous, on a voulu ici présenter hardiment *Shakespeare dans la forme de l'original.* Ainsi *les vers blancs répondent aux vers blancs, la prose à la prose et, autant que possible, les*

rimes aux rimes. Il paraît incontestable que dans l'ensemble *ce système est le seul qui puisse donner une image de la variété formelle de ce théâtre ou l'on passe avec une si magnifique aisance de la prose truculente des clowns aux rimes précieuses des jeunes seigneurs italianisés de la Renaissance anglaise.*

"Le texte original est d'ailleurs donné en regard de la traduction. Et si l'on reprend cette excellente pratique des XVII^e^ et XVIII^e^ siècles, c'est pour permettre au lecteur, s'il le désire, de contrôler à chaque pas le degré de réussite des 'équivalences' qu'on lui offre et lui donner en même temps le moyen de rafraîchir son Anglais à l'une des sources les plus riches de la langue.

"Une traduction ainsi comprise est, on le reconnaîtra, encore plus malaisée qu'une traduction littéraire en prose. On ne s'étonnera donc pas que la tâche ait été répartie entre divers collaborateurs. Chacun d'eux a pu choisir dans l'œuvre de Shakespeare la pièce qui lui semblait le mieux adaptée à son tour d'esprit. On espère qu'ainsi le génie multiple du grand poète sera mieux mis en lumière.

"Néanmoins, pour que l'unité de l'ensemble soit assurée, l'équipe des traducteurs reconnaît la direction d'un chef, *M. André Koszul, dont la réputation d'interpréte délicat et fidèle des poétes anglais est solidement établie.*"

CHAPTER XIV

Expansion Overseas—A Canadian Branch—Mr. Henry Button, Toronto—American Adventures—Dr. Furness—"Our Great Idol"—A Merry Gathering—The Bancrofts—Washington—An Audience with the President—Mount Vernon—Back to Canada—Winnipeg: the City in the Wilderness—Sir Daniel McMillan—The Scots Canadian Clan—Ottawa—Montreal—Home Again—The British and Foreign School Society—Nursery Schools—A Coming-of-age Fête—Motoring—A Letchworth Field Day.

IN 1912 Mr. Henry Button applied to us for a position on our staff as manager of our foreign business. He had been manager for Messrs. Cassell in Canada, and was very enthusiastic about the prospects of a branch of our business in Toronto. He seemed capable and very much in earnest, and after considering the pros and cons carefully and counting up our resources we determined to venture, so my son Hugh went out with Button and took premises and laid the foundations. We had long been struggling through agents to obtain a footing in Canada for our work, and we felt that wonderful country would be good hunting ground.

In the following spring my wife and I went to the States and to Canada, and I did as much prospecting and advertising as possible; I was received most kindly everywhere and was asked to speak at various clubs and meetings. I made many acquaintances, some of which ripened into lasting friendships. It was delightful to have my wife with me among many friends, and my only regret was that I could only have broken time with her, as business was very absorbing; still we did get about a good deal and were received everywhere

with unbounded hospitality, and enjoyed it to the full. We went to Philadelphia and were entertained by the Lippincotts, who gave a dinner party in our honour. I was invited as the guest of the Ben Franklin Club, and of course had to "talk," and I met many of the university professors with the help of my friend Schelling, who also took me to see Dr. Furness, the great Shakespearian commentator, and though I was supposed to go to lunch we were so keen in the examination of his Shakespearian treasures that we forgot all about it, and when I woke up I was only just in time to catch my train. He was a most delightful personality, enthusiastic, and with a gentleness and charm which were irresistible; we laughed to scorn and had great fun out of the Baconians and their theories, and dwelt lovingly on the personality and human kindness of our great idol. It was an occasion of great delight to me, and alas! it was the last, for when I next visited Philadelphia he had joined the great majority, and very likely had entered the circle of the Elizabethans and had met the great master whose work he had loved so intensely.

From Philadelphia we went to Wilmington to stay with my friends the Bancrofts, and they gave us a royal time. It happened that my friend was giving a banquet to the newly elected governor of the State of Delaware, familiarly known to his circle as Charlie Miller. My wife and I were made guests, and really we might have been *the* guests of the evening, for we were received with almost joyous cordiality and our healths were drunk with applause. It was indeed a merry gathering, and typical of America—nothing quite of that kind could have taken place in England. Such a meeting in London would have nothing but dull complimentary speeches and toasts, formal in character. We were none of us, remember, very young—mostly bald-pated or grey-haired men, and the majority men in high com-

mercial positions, chairmen of railways, presidents of banking companies, governors of states and so forth—but instead of formalities the meeting was one of good comradeship and jollity. The speeches were full of bantering humour and every toast was followed by a rollicking chorus, in which the greybeards joined heartily. The gathering may have lacked dignity, but it was infinitely more enjoyable than anything of the kind I have known in England.

On the following day our friends drove us over the battlefield of the Brandywine, where Washington defeated our handful of soldiers, and our host could not help rubbing it in, until I reminded him that their immediate ancestors were British subjects at that time, and probably some were among the soldiers whom Washington routed, and this reflection did seem to cool his ardour a little. It was a wonderful drive, the dogwood was in full bloom in the woods, and the variant shades of delicate pink and pure white made a wonderful contrast with the leafless trees which had not yet been fully awakened by the spring.

Next day again our host would have us go to Washington, and he contrived it so that we were not allowed to bear one penny of the expenses, which disturbed me very much. However, we had a perfect time, for his influence obtained for us admission not only to the meetings of Congress and to the Supreme Court of Justice, but to an audience with the President, who had but lately come to his honours. It was a great pleasure to meet Mr. Wilson again; much to my surprise he remembered me, though I had only met him for an hour or two when he was President of Princeton University. I could not help being struck with the almost stern aloofness when he was a university don compared with his urbane modesty of manner as the President of the greatest people in the world. He

kept a whole stream of people waiting a few minutes while he chatted with me about England and my work.

We went out to Mount Vernon and saw through the house of George Washington. The quiet, unpretentious homeliness of the place and its eighteenth-century setting filled me with emotion—the man that lived in this place was pure English, nay, English of the English; there was no sign of flamboyant Americanism about the place; it was the dwelling of a modest English gentleman, you felt it as soon as you entered the unpretentious building. A committee of ladies had re-covered most of the old furniture, and the homely Georgian surroundings made you feel that you were back in the eighteenth century, and you thought how marvellous a thing had come about that a whole continent peopled with English-speaking folk had looked to the quiet English gentleman-farmer, who lived in this modest abode, as their leader and the founder of their nation. No Englishman can possibly visit the shrine without his whole spirit being stirred to its depths. We then went to the house of General Lee, and to the cemetery where the soldiers of the Civil War who fell in the Virginian battles are buried. These were fights for freedom and ordered national life. The whole story from Washington to Lincoln is history that we are fully in touch with, and we almost seem actors and partakers in the struggle. I have longed to go again, there is no shrine of such significance in all the world save that of the Man of Sorrows, from whom we English folk have got our ideals and on whose teaching our ethics are based. We returned to Philadelphia, where we had luncheon at Bancroft's club. It had a room where ladies could have meals with their husbands, and could so far become members of their club, a great improvement on our own exclusive men's clubs.

While in Philadelphia we went to see the printing office where the *Saturday Evening Post* is produced. This paper was originally founded by Benjamin Franklin in the same city, and has now a circulation of a million and a half. Its advertising pages cost £1000 or more. It is housed in a palatial building designed for all kinds of hospitality. I had lunch in state on one of my visits; no hotel could have catered in more elaborate style, excepting that there was no wine offered—Mr. Curtis, the proprietor and founder, being a teetotaller, and as usual he is a self-made man, still full of a quiet energy, but not averse to talking about his rise in life.

It was delightful to see how my wife enjoyed the excitement and change, and though we could not be together much of the time, this holiday with the Bancrofts was the happiest part of our visit. Mrs. Macrae, one of the most delightful and mercurial temperaments I have met and a typical Virginian, took my wife about among her friends, so that she gained an impression as to how things were done in that society where old-world conventions still survived, along with the latest "American mode."

We left the States for Canada. My wife had her first experience of sleeping on an American night train, which she did not enjoy, especially as she elected to sleep in the upper berth, thinking that I should find it difficult to climb. Still it is a great comfort to get over a long journey in the night. We were most heartily received in Toronto, and stayed with the Buttons who had taken a "shack" on the Island in the Lake for the summer; and though getting back at night was inconvenient, it was jolly enough to get away from the city after the day's work was done. It led, however, to at least one or two funny episodes.

A friend had invited us together with Mr. and Mrs.

Button to dinner, and at the hour fixed we could not return to the island by the ordinary boat, so our friend Button had arranged to have us rowed back at a late hour, and we looked forward to a moonlight row on the still lake at midnight. As we did not dine till 8 p.m., it was late when we left our hosts, and when we arrived at the docks we found a boat which could not carry the four of us, with only one man to row. Of course it was absolutely impossible to attempt to venture across the great lake, we therefore had to seek an hotel, and the proprietor looked a little suspiciously at us in our evening dress, without any luggage; he made us pay beforehand for our accommodation, and we had to retire to bed without any night clothes or things like brush and comb, etc. In the morning we had to breakfast in our overcoats to cover up our war-paint, and our position was somewhat ridiculous. But these little accidents only added zest to our travels.

Business called me to Winnipeg, and as the distance was great and I could stay there but two days I went alone. It was a strange experience to me, that long journey of two days and nights in the train, passing through a wilderness of flat rocky country, for there was hardly any township or even what would be called a village. Most of the way was on a single line of rail, monotonous to a degree; a day and two nights of it and then to issue from the wilderness only into a prairie, flat from horizon to horizon, and suddenly, almost without warning, to rush into a fully-equipped station as large as Euston, and at once to enter an up-to-date hotel and see a city of some 200,000 inhabitants full of great business.

When I arrived I found telephone messages awaiting me and press interviewers, while Sir Daniel McMillan had left a letter for me to say he would call for me in the morning and drive me in his car round the city.

A wonderful experience, for he drove me first to a spot on which stood an old gateway, all that remained of Fort Garry, the station of the Hudson's Bay Company. Fifty years before there was only this and an Indian village—and now, here was a city, the metropolis of the west, with great broad streets, American sky-scrapers, and stores larger than any I knew in London. Sir Daniel had invited a little luncheon party to meet me, and one could tell what nation had founded the city by their names. There was a Hugh Sutherland, a MacIntyre, a MacKenzie, two Campbells, and a McMillan. They had much to tell of the city's short history and its rapid growth. Hugh Sutherland told me that he had walked on snow-shoes from Fort William to Fort Garry, when there was no town or any other white man's house but the fort there—this in one man's lifetime. I met Mr. Isaac Campbell, K.C., and we at once fraternised, he being a booky man, and our intimacy grew in my subsequent visits, and we have carried on a correspondence since. I also made the acquaintance of Mr. Lang, the one real book-seller in Winnipeg, except, of course, the stores. He was full of abounding hospitality, and on subsequent visits to this great city I was the guest of his wife and himself, and their house was made my home. I called upon the education authorities—to meet whom and discuss the possibilities of our supplying them with school books was the *raison d'être* of my visit.

I returned again to Toronto, and my wife and I went on to Ottawa, which we enjoyed greatly. In the days to come it seemed to us that this city would be one of the most beautiful capitals of this great nation.

I met for the first time Sir Wilfrid Laurier, just out of office, who seemed much upset by it. I wanted to talk to him about the way in which copyright was allowed to be abused by American publishers who

printed English copyright books and sold them in Canada without royalty or even acknowledgment under the English prices. Sir Wilfrid only replied that it was a matter for the Government, of which, he somewhat scornfully said, he was not a member. He was a handsome man, most immaculately dressed, clearly reckoning that it was one of his chief businesses in life to be so; he was constantly during our short interview feeling his collar and cravat, and settling his cuffs and sleeves: this took away some of the dignity that his fine presence and most interesting face would otherwise have inspired.

From Ottawa we went on to Montreal, where we met with the greatest hospitality and kindness, spending a day or two there *en route* for Quebec, and going by boat down the St. Lawrence during the night. We enjoyed immensely the time spent there, for we had introductions to influential people, and were shown over the battlefield of Wolfe and Montcalm. What an insignificant affair it all seemed, and yet it added to the empire its greatest dominion: a continent nearly as large as Europe, and with almost infinite possibilities for the world at large. The story becomes very vivid when you stand on the island in the river where Wolfe had his ships, and where on the night before the battle he calmly recited Gray's *Elegy*. The great fortress stands out of the river and seems impregnable—a perfect natural defence. You could fancy, indeed, as you stood there in the darkening night, you saw Wolfe's boats creep away from the ships with muffled oars and slip along the still waters of the St. Lawrence, and saw the soldiers climb the almost unscalable heights.

We embarked there for England, and were indeed glad to turn our faces homeward; we had never been away from our family for half as long a period before and were longing to get back; besides, our son Austen

had just passed his examinations, and was to take his degree at Cambridge, and we would be just in time to be with him on this great occasion. It was a close shave, for we arrived at Euston on Friday night and degrees were conferred next day. We got up early and motored down—it was a lovely day and Cambridge at its very best; we enjoyed it to the last moment. It was the last of many many happy days I had spent in that city which I had learned to love so well. We were in time to see our son take his degree with many of his chums, and had a delightful row on the Cam, and quite a reunion, for two of our girls were with us, and some of Austen's friends.

In July Austen came of age, and we had a fête in the garden, where his chums and many old friends came to greet him; as the night drew on we lit up the lawns and flower-beds with coloured lights, and had a dance al fresco.

All that summer our little car gave us much pleasure, for without being away from my work I could get delightful runs into the country with my wife and family, enjoying many things that no railway journeying could give us, and without the misery of having to catch trains. We saw cathedrals—I think Lichfield and Carlisle are the only ones I do not know, except those built in modern times—and many otherwise inaccessible abbeys. And really the motor is the most leisurely of all means of travel, for you go where you wish without hurry or fuss, and having seen what you want you move on, and have fresh air rushing by all the way.

After our return from America we were invited to attend a kind of field day at Letchworth, arranged by the workers at the factory in our honour, and they had taken a great deal of interest in the preparations of the entertainment. We were asked to a luncheon provided

by them, and they presented me with an address of kindly and almost affectionate greeting which pleased me mightily. I am glad to say this is the third or fourth time my workers have thus remembered me—some of them at this date had been with me some forty years, and it is a credit to us both that our relationship has been so constant and so kindly.

In the year 1902 I was asked to become a member of the Council of the British and Foreign School Society, founded by Joseph Lancaster in the year 1808—the first attempt to get any idea of a national system of education in England, and which, until Forster's Act of 1870, did a large and beneficent work, not only in England but in various parts of the world, in building and maintaining schools and training its own teachers, and this was done largely by voluntary efforts. Since the nation at last woke up to the responsibility of educating its own children, the activities of the society have been confined to the training of teachers. Its work is entirely unsectarian, and it has always held a premier position in the work of this kind. I found the work intensely interesting, and it opened out to me a new field of usefulness and drew me away to some extent from my absorption in business.

I took special interest in our college at Isleworth, with one hundred and fifty students, where my friend Arthur Burrell was Principal, and an ideal one at that. I soon, however, discovered that these colleges, and indeed all training colleges for teachers with which I became acquainted, were little more than adult high schools, where for two years the students simply continued their education, but training in the art of pedagogy was an entirely secondary matter. Beyond a Master of Method's lectures and some four or five weeks' use of a practising school, the whole time was taken up in the study of sciences, French, the classics

in Greek and Latin—all necessary to teachers of these subjects, and essentially valuable, if there was time in two years' training for all these things, but futile without added sound training in the art of teaching elementary scholars. Even yet there is no serious attempt to remedy this. Many educationists have been struggling to increase the college term to three years, and at the end of that period a degree equal to at least a university B.A. should be compulsory upon all students who desire to enter the profession. It is a consummation devoutly to be wished, but seems almost a forlorn hope. One wonders how it is that the men and women upon whom we rely for the training of the nation's children have often been a despised and rejected community, why their high profession—it seems to me the highest that any man or woman could be called to—is insufficiently recognised; even a pettifogging lawyer—a parasite almost upon society—looks down upon the man to whom he sends his children for schooling.

I have tried to look into the position of these teachers both here and in America and Canada, and have found it deplorable in both countries. Not only are they wretchedly paid—in London the teachers had to strike before they could get a salary of £120 a year in *war time*, while the dustman is paid £150!—but they have not proper status; few feel that they should be the most honoured servants of the State. In America, while visiting a lady professor at one of the great colleges, I met a young lady who was helping my friend as a servant during the vacation in order to help pay her college fees. I got into conversation with her and had a peep into her history. She had a widowed mother whom she helped to support—she had worked her way through the high school and the normal school (really a school of pedagogy), and then at twenty went

to be an elementary-school teacher in a provincial town at a salary of $450 per annum. She told me how she lived. She had to be at school at 8.30 in the morning and left at 4 p.m., eating her luncheon in the school. She had home-lessons to correct in a very second-rate boarding-house, where she had to do all her own work, including laundry of garments one at a time each day, in her wash-hand basin. In vacations she had to wait in restaurants in order to earn enough money to live. This in America!

I heard almost exactly the same story at an educational conference at Oxford a year or two ago, the only difference being that the English girl had £100 a year instead of £90. Surely this is a national disgrace—but the story goes back through the centuries, the teacher has always been a kind of pariah in our life. How many of us who pretend to be educated or refined meet elementary-school teachers at festive or social boards, or are proud to call them friends? That seems a strange question to ask, but it will take some answering. This Government has passed an Education Act, by which school attendance is made compulsory up to sixteen and continuation school to eighteen; but found after passing the Act that many more teachers would be needed, and as there were 30,000 short its enforcement had to be put off for seven years. Truly our ideas of education are wonderful! The teachers, I am glad to say, have risen in revolt at last, and surely when the public know the facts they will cleanse the country of this shame. My friends will forgive this digression which has little to do with this uneventful story, save as it exhibits one of the activities of these last sixteen years of my life. I confess that if there was anything that would make me desire a longer life it is that I might take an earnest part in reconstructing our national education.

My father's work on the Council of the British and Foreign School Society brought him into touch with his native town, Darlington, where the Society had founded a training college. The head—Miss Hawtrey—became a valued friend and, I believe, brought under his notice the work just begun in nursery schools. The tale of his association with this work may be told in Miss Margaret McMillan's words:

"My Recollections of Mr. J. M. Dent

"Mr. Dent visited the Rachel McMillan School for the first time early in the winter of 1918. It was a very cold, sunny day, and he came in with a covering of snow from head to foot, but looking hale and well. He stopped to lunch and passed nearly the whole day here, watching the life of the children in the shelters and the open-air life in the rigours of winter.

"There was no doubt, from the first, about Mr. Dent's faith in the work and its object. The years 1917–18 were years of acute anxiety for me. Early in 1917 I had the crushing blow of my life in the sudden death of my dear sister, Rachel McMillan. Mr. Fisher had opened an extension of the school in August 1917, but rapid development brought with it, of course, new and great responsibilities. I had slender means, and a difficult task to face. Mr. Dent spoke to me with good cheer. He said at once, 'I must help you. I *will* help you.' And he was true to his promise. He helped me with money, but not with money alone. His sympathy was a great sustaining power in my work during 1918, and the following two years—the testing years, not indeed the most trying of all, for the first years were the most terrible, when my sister bore the brunt of that experience at the cost of her life. But Mr. Dent came in now, at a critical hour. He steadied the work, and made it possible for me to go forward with the scheme for a training centre.

"He began by giving me money, collected himself about £200, then secured for me through a friend the sum of £300. He also lent £500 for the opening of a hostel. Through this help I was enabled to take more students. Finally Mr. Dent published my book *The Nursery School*,

and won for me, in so doing, the powerful support of many generous Americans.

"Mr. Dent himself financed a nursery school in Darlington, and he was always generous in admitting any help that the Deptford school gave to other pioneers. He was a very loyal and large-minded friend, and quite free, so far as I know, from petty jealousies or the grudging spirit that poisons so many gifts. He rejoiced that the children of the slum should have nurture, and ardently worked to give this new order of early education to the poorest. I have seen him look distressed at the thought or sight of child-suffering, and he grieved when the Geddes axe fell and the money voted by the L.C.C. in 1919 for nursery schools was withdrawn. My book *The Nursery School* was received very coldly. This too, I know, was a grief to him, and for reasons other than personal interest, which had nothing to do with his regret. When success came, in America, his joy was very obvious and real. He made frequent visits to this school, followed its fortunes, shared its joys and sorrows, and was, in short, a wonderful friend.

"Mr. Dent believed that this order of school was the base and beginning of a new social order. He saw in the suffering and neglect of the early years the fruitful seed-field of sorrow and sin and failure in later life. This is why he threw himself whole-heartedly into this movement in his old age. This is why he will always be associated with its triumphs and successes in this and every other land.

"Margaret McMillan."

CHAPTER XV

A Tragic Year—International Relationships—Paris and Leipzig—My Two Younger Sons, Paxton and Austen—The Great Sacrifice—The Spring of 1915—An "Everyman" Itinerary in U.S.A.—The *Lusitania*—'Frisco to Los Angeles—The Grand Canyon—Minneapolis—Chicago—Fatal News—Death of Paxton at Neuve Chapelle—The Return Home—Austen at Gallipoli—His End—Letters from the War—Soldier's Simplicity—Sorrow and Care—Our Daughters as Munition Workers—1916: Another Voyage Oversea—Lord Morris—Canadian Enterprise—The "House of Dent" in Toronto—Edmonton—Saskatoon—Back to the East—Boston—"The Tavern Club"—Presidential Election—A Rest by the Way.

AND now I come to the tragic year of 1914. We had taken my sons, Paxton and Austen, into the business, and they were settling down to work. We had a strenuous year, for we had begun in 1913 two new series of books, the Collection Gallia in French, and the Wayfarers' Library in English; the latter was to do for modern fiction and belles-lettres what we had attempted to do for more classical literature in "Everyman," and we set ourselves to publish a hundred volumes in the twelve months, and this filled us up with work. At the same time—as I have mentioned in an earlier chapter—we had opened up relationship with France, and established an agency there for French publications and a depot for our English books. I visited Paris to see after this work in the summer, and then went on to Leipzig to attend a publishers' exhibition, or rather an exhibition of everything connected with the manufacture of books.

This might have stood for the fraternity of nations, for every nation of standing and many smaller nations

had exhibits. We had taken a very considerable site to exhibit our publications. I stayed here a week examining the exhibits of books and machinery, and at the week-end when leaving I was asked to a kind of high tea to which the burgomaster had invited all the master printers from England who had come to the exhibition in company.

At that meeting one of the printers, in his best German, thanked the burgomaster for his kindness and hospitality, and said how pleased they were to be among their brothers in the same craft. The burgomaster answered in his best English saying how glad he was to meet them all and that it was good to part as friends. Within ten days England was at war with Germany.

I returned home and our family had gone to the sea, and I joined them there for the week-end with Paxton. We had been watching with some anxiety, of course, the accounts of trouble in the Near East, but not with any fear that our country would be drawn into it at present; then there began Germany's quarrel with France and subsequently her declaration of war, and as we heard that she determined to pass through Belgium we knew that we were to be drawn into it. It is impossible to analyse my mind and emotions as we waited over Saturday and Sunday in suspense for the news as to what our country would do—though we did know that if Germany persisted in her demands to pass through Belgium there was no alternative but for us to join France and Russia, yet we hoped—ah! how we hoped!—that when Germany knew that if she continued in her demand she would draw us into war against her she would desist at the last hour, and that we still might have peace. But when Sir Edward Grey made his statement in the House that Monday night, we knew that the Government action was in-

evitable and would have the whole country behind it. I cannot say my heart leaped up as I thought of my country's stand for righteousness, though I was fully convinced of her cause—no, I was stunned and numbed and hopeless for many days, and recoiled with horror from the thought of a war so universal and with such weapons; but as the days went by and I saw the rush to the colours, and the exaltation of the nations, it came into my heart that after all it was a great thing to be called upon to defend the weak and uphold the nations in a great crusade against wrong. But alas! what did this mean to us? It meant asking our two young lads to take up arms to defend us—to take them away from their free and happy outlook, to the stern horrors of the bloodiest war the world has ever seen. But go they must, we could not cheat them of their honour, and we sent them, Paxton and Austen, with our blessing, and tried to feel proud and glad that we had two such fine stalwarts to give to so noble a cause. They were both of them in the army before the end of August, and we were indeed proud that they did not wait to train for commissions, though Austen could have claimed one because of his training in the Cambridge O.T.C. Our Christmas came, and it was hard to be merry without our lads, for although Austen was still in England he could not be with us; but curiously our hearts had lost their depression and we felt something of the joy and exaltation of having our part in the Great Sacrifice.

The spring of 1915 came, and I had to go to America. It seemed at first as if I should stay by my wife and family and leave my business there to take care of itself; but we weighed it well over in our minds—I could do little to help if anything happened, and I had given my word and must go and do "my job." Besides the ordinary business detail in New York and Canada, I

had undertaken an itinerary of the great state universities of America, that I might confer with these schools of English literature as to the works most needed in "Everyman" for use in their curricula. In 1913 I had been to some of the eastern universities—Columbia, New York, Princeton, Philadelphia, etc. To some of these I went again this time, also to Johns Hopkins and other seats of learning,—then to Canada, to the McGill University, to Toronto, Winnipeg, Regina, Edmonton and British Columbia, speaking at all these places, and meeting the faculties at each university. Going on farther through Seattle to San Francisco I stayed at Palo Alto and Berkeley University, and met really delightful men at this splendidly equipped and well-staffed institution, where I made many friends.

On my journey to 'Frisco I asked the typist-clerk on the train to work out my itinerary through the towns I wanted to visit and ascertain if I could return home by the *Lusitania*, which was due to sail in three weeks' time; he did so, but in about an hour's time he returned, and told me that he had just heard by wire that the *Lusitania* had been sunk by a submarine! This was indeed a shock to me, for though the Germans had already sunk merchandise ships, they had not destroyed passenger ships going to or coming from America. When the awful tidings came that nearly all the ship's passengers and crew had been lost the indignation was tremendous—no act that the Germans had committed up to this time had been so terrible or so foolish as this, for it aroused the West, which up to this time had been largely indifferent to the war or to an understanding of the unscrupulousness of German policy and their own danger. From 'Frisco I went to Los Angeles and stayed with Mr. Russell, who entertained me most hospitably, and drove me in his car through the old Spanish territory and the Indian Reserve—a wonderful

drive indeed through orange groves and vineries, and among all the old monasteries and mission stations dating back two and three hundred years. The oranges were in full fruit in May, and the men were harvesting them; we went among them and picked as many as we could carry, for me to eat upon my long journey.

Then my host put me into a train that took me to the Grand Canyon in Arizona—the greatest wonder in nature I have ever gazed upon. Arriving in the early morning I walked up the hillside reaching from the train to the plateau, and suddenly without warning came upon the awe-inspiring, almost terrible beauty of the scene. I found myself upon a great plateau, but at my feet a yawning gorge some five to six thousand feet deep and a mile or so wide; in the gorge were strange mountains like colossal Indian or Burmese pagodas of strange and weird beauty. Try and imagine some miles of these mysterious temple-like mountains, built layer upon layer of different-coloured strata, and changing in colour as the sun passed over them from east to west. When I arrived the eastern sun was just rising above the line of the plateau and lighting up the crowns of these mystic pinnacles with gold, while I looked down into a strange and fearful gloom; but as the sun rose higher its light penetrated more deeply and dispersed gradually the deep shadows, revealing the delicate shades and tints of different strata—pale pinks, ochre-yellows, tender grey-blues, marvellous olive-greens—growing out of the impenetrable depths beneath, while in the dead quiet one could hear the rumbling of unseen waters. As the sun rose to its zenith the shadows which had fascinated me, and added strangely to the beauty of the scene, began to vanish, the colours and outlines became harder—there was more of the "common light of day" and less of marvellous

sublimity; but it was wonderful, as the sun declined to the west, to watch the shadows change again and colours come back, and then as the sun went down to see them vanish, and the awful gloom settle once more, until I could bear it no longer and crept away in fear. It was the Inferno, Purgatorio and Paradiso all in one, only the Inferno came last, and I acknowledge that my flesh crept as the darkness drew on, and I felt all the terror of a nightmare, which haunted me for days—I felt I was fleeing from the wrath to come. As I have said, it is the most awe-inspiring thing in all nature that I have seen in my travels.

I next made a journey of three nights and days to Minneapolis to the University of Minnesota, where I was received most hospitably by Professor Nothstein, who put me up in his rooms at the club, and where I am sorry to say I was ill for some days. However, each day I had little levees in my room of the different professors, and discussed questions of education in the two countries, but most of all the Germans and the war. Here, and indeed in every university I visited from east to west, I found enthusiastic sympathy with us and the Allies—with England apart from the justice of our cause. Indeed, I was made to feel that blood was thicker than water, and among the educated classes, of whom I met quite a concourse, there was an almost universal desire that America should enter the war against tyranny and aggression. The only university where I felt the least neutrality was at Michigan—owing probably to the fact that a great many of its students were German. Even in Chicago, where at first I was fearful to speak of the war, I found the most ardent sympathy—all the more remarkable, as through the conservatism of our great universities in not accepting pre-graduate work from American students, but compelling them to begin the whole curriculum over

again, nearly all the professors I met had taken their Doctor's degree in Germany, and of course had made many friends and had certain sympathy with German methods. I stayed at Wisconsin, Michigan and Chicago, getting many suggestions and some translations and introductions from some of my friends the professors.

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I had intended to visit Cornell, but urgent telegrams from my friend Macrae cut short my itinerary, and as I had had no letters from home and was very anxious, I left some universities unvisited and returned to New York via Toronto. And there Macrae broke the news —which by the tender forethought of my dear wife had been kept from me until I could hear it from my friend—of my son Paxton's death in the trenches at Neuve Chapelle. I had tried all along to prepare myself for this—and had brought to bear all my philosophy and religious hopes to help me—but it was indeed hard to bear—harder still because I could not be with his mother to do what I could to sustain and help her; but I had really given my son and could not ask him back again. It was some comfort for me to know that he knew no pain, having been shot through the brain —and he passed beyond without the struggle and consciousness of death. May I say here, that my faith in the after-life is confirmed and made stronger by my dear lad's passing—how could a simple bullet destroy that loving stalwart personality, or cheat him of his development and joy in his young life? I returned home towards the end of June and found my wife brave and cheerful, though her eldest boy would never put his strong arms about her again, and I came into our dear garden, with the summer shadows creeping across the lawn and the stately trees dressed in all their

summer glory, standing where I left them in April, when they were bare and leafless, but now freshly clothed upon even as my boy, and a sense of peace came upon me. The war was not everywhere, not even in this world, and my son had gone through his Passion and become again as a little child. Austen had been sent to Gallipoli, and was there at the Lancashire landing, writing us a most vivid description of it, and it was there he heard of Paxton's death, and was able to write consoling letters to his mother and me. His twenty-third birthday was in July, and we prepared our gifts and sent them to him with letters and good wishes. He received them the day before the date and wrote us from bed, as he had a slight sun-stroke, but he was in good spirits and full of loving kindness. Alas! before this letter reached us we had a wire from his friend Dr. Thomson telling us he was severely wounded—and then from the War Office the usual cold announcement of his death. Poor little mother! but very proud withal.

It was very hard to settle down to the daily task, or to live again in the exaltation of a great fight for right, in the days that followed the passing of our boys. The daily task had lost a great deal of its impetus because there was no need to plan their future or to help make a place for them in the world's work. And now it seemed at times to us as if their cause, if won at all, would be at too great a price by the loss of all the young manhood, with all their mental and spiritual powers. At times it seemed that life was futile, and its civilisation like castles built on sand which the tidal regularity of war swept away as fast as they were built—indeed that the advance in science and in every other direction seemed only to make war more terrible and to take from it the last vestiges of chivalry and romance.

The months of torture my dear lad Paxton lived

through in the vile mud of the trenches, so completely made vivid by Henri Barbusse's terrible picture in *Under Fire*, which we know to be the absolute truth, were more beastly and more to the shame of humanity than in any other war that has been known. The fighting with gases from Hell, the distribution of germs of disease—the whole story in its physical aspect is more terrible than Dante's Hell; men felt themselves as creatures antediluvian, down in the slime and horror of a world that had no soul. The days were heavy upon us, and as the stories of the loss of many bright natures came to us day by day we began to lose hope and despair seemed creeping upon us.

I had been expanding my business and opening the branches in Paris and Toronto, dreaming great things for my sons. I had three, possibly four, who could help in extending our work, and there seemed no limitation to our potentialities—my vision went out to the horizons of what was possible for the propagation of literature. Alas! all this had to be curbed, and work became a burden to me, and almost a distress.

At this time I got together the lads' letters with the intention of printing them, for the friends that had loved them. Now, these two lads of ours were not built in heroic mould—they were like other English lads, very little troubled about the future, and they had no great liking for care or worry or things difficult or unpleasant; they were pure in heart I know, and no shirkers, but they showed no sign of being more than their fellows in the bearing of pain or forgetfulness of themselves. These lads enlisted as privates in the first month of the war—Paxton joining the Seaforth Highlanders in August 1914, and after being drilled for two or three months was fighting in November, while Austen joined the Medical Corps and went out in March 1915. They both had to bear the physical sufferings and

miseries of the early days when everything was improvised; they had to sleep in the same bed—or on the same floor—with uncleanly and uncouth men; they had to drill to the utmost capacity of their strength; they had indeed to change their lives entirely—putting off everything they had cared for of cleanliness and wholesome living, let alone any intellectual life. Well, through all the letters that I have read from both there is not one word of complaint—not one word about the hard life—nothing but the most cheerful spirits and merriment—nothing seemed to come amiss—every now and then a note of exaltation, but mostly a letter to cheer us and take away our fears.

Letters from the War

SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE, 15 *March*, 1915.

. . . "I will try and give you some idea of what we did last week.

"On Tuesday (March 9th) I was duly transferred from my company to the M.G. (Maxim Gun) Section. On Wednesday, 10th, at 3 a.m. the battalion marched up to the firing-line and took up its position as reserves to the firing-line and support. Some time during the morning—I forget the time now—a most infernal bombardment started from our guns. They simply poured lyddite and shrapnel into the German lines, like turning hose-pipes with rose attachments on them. There were some very big guns engaged and we had the novel experience of seeing the shells travelling through the air—almost from the mouth of the guns. That lasted about one and a half hours, and then ceased as suddenly as it began—and then the attack was made by our 1st Battalion; they carried the trenches and the village behind them and swept on up to the edge of a wood. As soon as they started advancing—we had to follow them. We left our limber behind ('limber' is the machine the Maxim is moved about on) and two men carried the gun, one the tripod and the rest two boxes of ammunition.

"We took up our position in a fresh line of trenches and

had the pleasure of receiving the German shells intended for our artillery. When it was daylight we had orders to move forward; everything was quiet except for a few rifle-shots and an occasional shell each way.

"We doubled up to where the battalion had dug themselves in during the night, and there lay down.

"We lay there for some time while troops were brought up, until at length, feeling so cold and there being no sign of moving for some time, I started to dig myself in. It passed the time very well and I got it finished just when we started a second bombardment of the Germans who were entrenched in a wood; they gave a desultory reply until we finished; our fusillade of shells was something awful, and I can still hear the shells whistling—or rather wailing—through the air, over my head. We could see the masses of shells bursting over the woods, and it seemed hardly creditable that any soul could live through it. Rather to our surprise, when we stopped the bombardment to allow the Indians to attack, the Germans replied in kind, but, thank goodness, with nothing like the intensity.

"For the whole afternoon it was 'Hell' lying in our little holes we had made, and wondering where the next shell would drop.

"Jack Johnsons, coal-boxes, double- and triple-bursting shell, shrapnel, and percussion shells, all came over. There were some extraordinary escapes; one Jack Johnson blew one man from one trench to another, and he wasn't scratched! The others near him were all knocked over.

"A piece of shrapnel killed an Indian, passed through one of our men's packs and killed another Indian on his other side—he himself was untouched.

"A Jack Johnson fell within some three or four yards of me and within *three feet* of several men and nobody was hurt. I felt the heat of the beastly thing on my face, and when it exploded I simply rocked in my cradle of clay!

"We lay there all day, and came out at 8 o/c after lying by for the relieving troops to take our places and also to gather our stragglers. We took up our quarters in a very minute stable with two stalls. There were twenty-four men in the place, and you can imagine the squash. I believe it was the only room left in the village—with side and top covering. We tried to get some sleep there after having discarded our puttees and changing our socks, but we all

felt terribly cold. During the night, we were all rudely awakened by two Jack Johnsons falling in quick succession quite close to us. We cleared out of the house in double-quick time, but nothing further happened—so we went back again. At about 3 or 4 a.m. we had some rations sent down and had a feed of bread and butter. . . .

"At 1.30 a.m. we went back; I don't know how far it was from these trenches to where we dumped the gun for the night, and the limber never came to meet us; it seemed never-ending. We were parched with thirst, and our mouths were thick with the fumes of the shell-fire. We had had a lot of carrying the day before and we were utterly tired out, and in addition to that there was something wrong with my knees. We left the gun at a village, and marched farther back to another place, where we landed at 6 a.m. Just as we were turning in, we were told that we should be moving farther back still at 7 a.m.! But we managed to snatch an hour's sleep and then crawled back to this other village. We stayed there all day—and then moved up to —— (the village where we left the gun) at 7 p.m. Owing to blocks on the road, we were five hours doing five miles.

"The battalion lay there that night, in reserve, under quarter-hour's notice, and we got our first *real* sleep since Monday night; we came right away on Saturday afternoon and are now resting for a few days. Minchin did grand work—he seems quite bullet-proof. . . .

"One shell fell into a section and wounded fifteen or sixteen men and one of our majors, but other than that there were practically no casualties that day.

"A piece of shell knocked a lump off the top of my trench and buzzed over my head—and I had only *just* bent down. One man had a lucky escape, a piece of shell smashing his rifle and causing a wood splinter to cut his lip a bit!

"We later shifted into some glorious dug-outs, which I'm afraid will never be used now—we've left them so far behind. Towards evening we got still farther forward until we passed over the German trenches, and when darkness came down, we went still farther forward to take up our position as supports for the next day. The ground was all strange and as there were a number of ditches and watery trenches, we had a very trying time trying to find our way about. We eventually reached a burn—four feet broad and three

feet deep—and discovered that we must wade or jump (with the heavy gun!). The ground was unsuitable for jumping, and so were we, with our packs and equipment on, so we had to wade.

"It was far from pleasant, sliding into that slimy water, and a little while after we emerged we felt very uncomfortable, and then we were told we had gone too far and should have to turn back. You should have heard the swearing. Well! we had to re-wade the beastly thing, and one man says he feels sure he trod on a body at the bottom."

P. M. D.

29 *March*, 1915.

. . . "Things are so quiet just at present that I am taking this chance to send off a small note.

"We came into the trenches the night before last and have had practically no sleep since, both on account of the cold and also because most of us were really too tired.

"When we first came in I was in the front trench, but there was not room for the whole team so two others and myself were sent back to the support-trench where our other gun is; when we got there (about 11.30) we had to turn to and help dig and make a dug-out; we were greatly handicapped as the sand-bags we had sent for were delayed until 4 a.m. (The men fill these sand-bags with earth and sand mixed to form a protection.) Before they came we decided to finish the thing as best we could without them, as we got so tired of waiting; we finished ours and another smaller one, just on daybreak, and then we scratched up some sort of breakfast. About 11 o/c we crawled into the dug-out, six of us! and tried to get some sleep, but we were all so tired and cramped that it was very fitful and hardly any good. The mansion measures about 10 ft. long by 3 ft. 6 in. broad and 3 ft. 6 in. high, so you can imagine the squash, for we had to keep our equipment on, in case of emergency, though luckily we could leave our packs handy outside, they can be left behind if necessity arises.

"That cake you sent me *was* good, but it was cooked a shade too much, for although it arrived intact, that shaking it received caused it to fall to pieces when I tried to cut it. We all like cakes a little underdone here. The butter (home-made) and marmalade (also home-made) were lovely, but don't you think it rather tempting Providence to send

it in a stone jar? I think a Lyle's golden syrup tin would be really better, and I do want you to send some more.

"I don't know why I broke off in my account of our doings, at about 11 o/c yesterday morning—I'll continue. We tried to get what sleep and rest we could during the day, but it was not worth much. As soon as it was dusk we turned out again and put some finishing touches to the trench and dug-outs, and at about 10.30 we turned in again, but we had hardly been down more than half an hour when the call came for more digging; we crawled out more dead than alive and set to, but it was awful work trying to keep one's eyes open, and one's knees felt as weak as a beastly rabbit. It wasn't until 4 o/c that we finished, and then few of us could get any sleep as we were really too tired and cramped. I didn't get any at all as my back was being eaten away, and I couldn't turn to scratch it without disturbing seriously the man next me, who was really fast asleep, so I just had to endure till daybreak. I had breakfast then, and after lying down a bit, got up again, marched about a bit, and then sat down to this.". . . .

P. M. D.

GALLIPOLI, 18 *May*, 1915.

. . . "I was extremely pleased to have the *Daily Mail's* account of our landing. The account was a plain statement of fact with no exaggeration.

"I wish I could give you an idea of that landing. It will stand out as one of the most tremendous things in history.

"The troops started landing in the early dawn of Sunday, March 25. Unfortunately and yet fortunately WE did not land until midnight though we set off in a 'lighter' from the *Aragon* at 7 p.m. The distance was only a few hundred yards. We mostly tried to get a doze as we expected heavy work through the night. . . .

"None of the places where landings were effected were natural landing-places.

"In one case a fair-sized ship the *River Clyde* was purposely run ashore on to the rocks to get within wading distance of the shore. In some cases men were up to their necks in water.

"On the beach on which our lot landed we got within knee-depth of the shore. As a matter of fact we also had

the luxury of a plank (the advantage of being late-comers) and only got our feet wet.

"The beach is a small bay about 300 yards across and from the edge of the sea to the foot of the cliffs is only about 20 yards.

"The ground rises steeply from the shore though not to a great height, and all along the ridge of these cliffs the Turks were strongly entrenched and fortified by well-placed and well-hidden machine-guns.

"In the hands of the British such a position would have been absolutely impregnable.

"The primary assault, of course, was delivered by the Navy, and during the first hours of that beautiful calm Sunday morning they made such a bombardment as can find no parallel in the whole of the world's history. There were English, French and Russian ships pouring in their huge shells and smashing to atoms the fortifications along the coast.

"I was on guard on the *Aragon* the whole night, so witnessed the whole engagement from the very start. It was a very one-sided affair as there was no reply to the devastating gunnery of the Allied Navies. We—the *Aragon* (may it rot!)—sailed right in amongst the battleships and anchored close to the *Queen Elizabeth* and watched the havoc wrought by her terrible 15-inch guns.

"While the bombardment was still progressing they started landing the troops in cutters and lighters from the transports—British, French, Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders.

"With the enemy so strongly entrenched and the landing so difficult 'the loss of life was necessarily heavy' (I quote from the *Daily Mail*) and many a man never even set foot on shore. It seems extraordinary how the Turks ever allowed a single man to land—but our men not only landed but scaled the cliffs in their full kit with packs and drenched clothing, and in the face of terrible rifle and machine-gun fire drove the Turks from their entrenchments on the cliff edge and advanced inland for two or three miles.

"That is what they had done on our beach. We landed on this little bit of beach at midnight.

"At 11.30 p.m. the Turks had sprung a formidable surprise counter-attack on the invaders and drove them back, back—right to the edge of the cliff.

"It was understood from the beginning that once we landed we had to push forward. There was no going back. In front of us the Turks—behind us the sea. They drove our men right back to the cliff edge and the fight raged there throughout the night—vacillating—a fight which meant either the holding of our position or complete annihilation.

"One young fellow had summed up the position and quietly made up his mind that in the event of the Turks showing their heads over that cliff edge he was going to enter the sea and swim—just swim!

"We (the Field Ambulance) had left all our kit, overcoat included, on the ship. It was a bitterly cold night and raining withal.

"It was impossible to sleep or get warm so that I was only too pleased to be able to lend a hand hauling guns and wagons ashore and running about doing all sorts of odd jobs in between. I preferred warmth to rest. (I'd been on guard all the night previous.)

"Morning at last stole into the sky; we had held the position and with daylight always comes renewed hope and courage. Daylight too, of course, was all in our favour as we were on unknown ground. During the morning we got some of the guns into position and made headway.

"The only move the Field Ambulance have made since then has been to move on to the top of the cliff, which we did on the Tuesday following our landing. This is now about five miles behind the firing-line and each section (A, B and C) takes it in turn to form an Advance Dressing Station about two miles ahead. The following day that section will take on nursing and stretcher-bearing duties, and the next day they will 'stand by' to take on odd duties about the camp.

"For the first day or two we had a tremendous amount of work to do and we had the camp ground covered with wounded men. To dress their wounds and attend to their insatiable wants was no light task and a few approaching shells combined with a tent full of serious cases gave one an excellent test for concentration and coolness. However, our brigade has been resting for some time now and work, if any, has been light." . . .

A. C. D.

GALLIPOLI, 20 *June*, 1915.

. . . "The trenches are still under the hill. Now and then there is a terrific bombardment followed by an attack and sometimes the outcome is a slight advance on our part. At other times the Turks attack and take a line of trenches. We make a counter-attack and regain our position. Sometimes it is vice versa, but at present and for some time past I think we have been just holding the position, waiting until full preparations have been made for a big attack.

"In the meantime tremendous things have been done on the shore, and the beach on which we landed on that memorable Sunday, 25th April, is now absolutely unrecognisable.

"One face of the cliffs has been cut to suit the customer's taste, with good roads running from shore to cliff top. Along the beach there is now practically no shifting sand. There is a good firm road and by the side of it a light railway which is being used by a party of Egyptians for moving truck-loads of rock.

"There are several landing-stages. Most of these were spoilt by one or two days' heavy sea, but with the railway at work they have now made one or two really good substantial ones. There is a roadway for pedestrians right round by the cliffs now, and this is being worked at hard and will soon be available for vehicles, which will be a great blessing as the Turks keep the road lively with shrapnel most of the day.

"All this roadwork is being done by parties of Egyptian soldiers under English officers, and they are hard at work blasting the rocks, getting rid of the debris and making the roads. We also have a party of Greek refugees working on the shore.

"As you know, we have almost every species of 'troops' out here.

"The Gurkhas and Sikhs are fine-looking chaps, and the French bring with them every shade of black that can be imagined. The Senegalese is almost a navy blue in his blackness. He is tall and lanky with a small round head, and in his gay blue and red uniform looks very quaint. The Sikhs are really fine-looking men and you never see one or two gathered together without seeing a number of them washing themselves all over. They have long silky coal-black hair in which they take great pride. This is

always washed and then done up in a little bun and then they wear a khaki turban on their head. Many of them are really beautiful.

"We still do two days at the Advance Dressing Station, two on the Hospital Tents at the Base and one day's rest.

"I get several bathes in during the week, and thereby manage to keep fairly clean. I am in the best of health and spirits, though of course since dear old Pat has gone I am anxious to get back home as soon as possible to put an end to all your anxiety." . . .

A. C. D.

GALLIPOLI, 28 *June*, 1915.

. . . "There is a terrific bombardment going on so if this letter is not all that could be desired either in the matter of caligraphy or composition you must lay the blame at the feet of our R.G.A and R.F.A. who are combining to make the most continuous and ear-splitting din that it is impossible to conceive without actual experience.

"There is a battery of French ·75's just behind us banging away like a maxim and each shot seems to hit you smack between the eyes. By the continuous roar in the air of shells in flight you would imagine the heavens (?) had opened and were pouring a deluge of high-explosives. It is impossible to speak as you cannot hear yourself speaking let alone anyone else. . . . The wounded won't start coming in until the bombardment has ceased and the attack begun, because modern warfare is *not*, as depicted in most of our illustrateds, a miscellany of cannon, infantry, yeomanry, stretcher-bearers, rifle-fire and bayonet-charges in a general medley all on the stage at once.

"In a big attack the order is artillery, rifle-fire, bayonet-charge, and when you're charging you don't trip over guns in the middle of the battle-field. As a rule they are several miles behind the firing-line and well dug in and you don't find stretcher-bearers leading a bayonet-charge—it isn't 'done.'

"We (B Section) are at the Advance Dressing Station. We imagine we always come in for the bombardments and big attacks! We are in a nice safe place, but it is rather like taking the place of the man on the music-hall stage who has knives thrown at him. Unless something slips he walks away unharmed at the end of the performance leaving

a pretty pattern of knives on the wall behind him. Nevertheless I'll bet he's d——d glad when that part of the performance draws to a conclusion!

"The rifle-fire is now starting and the big distant guns are having a rest. These beastly ·75's (who can see what they are doing?) are still banging away though.

"If we are out to collect trenches on a large scale, we bombard the Turks' 1st line—stop—attack and (if successful) take it. Our men then keep low and the guns elevate on to the second line; bombard, infantry then attack and so on till you reach Berlin. But it's a long way to lots of places besides Tipperary, and two of them are Berlin and Constantinople!

"I've been wanting to put in a good word for the Turks for a long time and the cutting you enclosed in your letter of 3rd June gives me the opportunity.

"Your cutting is a quotation under the heading '"Kultur" of the Turk' of a letter in the *Morning Post* from a British officer in the Dardanelles, where he says 'only one Turkish prisoner was taken; he tried to shoot the doctor who was attending to his wounds. When being carried on a stretcher he tried to bayonet the stretcher-bearers and nearly bit the finger off the man who did up his wounds.'

"Now, of course, I mustn't doubt for a moment the word of the 'British officer,' at the same time I suggest he got this story second-hand and passed it on without inquiring too minutely into its veracity or even probability. I have seen a great many Turkish prisoners; I have attended to a good number of wounded Turks and even carried them on stretchers. The moment a Turk, wounded or otherwise, falls into our hands he is searched and stripped of everything which might be used as a weapon, and when you carry a wounded Turk on a stretcher you don't hand him his loaded rifle and put his bayonet handy so that should he feel so inclined he may indulge in a little shooting and bayonetting display at your expense. As for the biting incident I can only suggest that he wished to imply hunger, but I have seen that done much more easily than by eating bits of other people! Personally I must say I think the story is a little wild. . . .

"Of course I've heard wild stories out here, but I'm a bit of a sceptic and don't believe all that comes my way.

"I have never heard a *probable* story of Turkish mal-

practices and never a one at first-hand, but I have had first-hand and proved cases to show that the Turks are behaving well, and most open-minded people I have met have agreed with me that the Turks are 'playing the game' like real sportsmen.

"I don't believe the Turks are our enemies at all and I don't believe they want to fight us. It was a case of the *government* of a poor state going to the highest bidder, and the Turkish soldier has to fight us in consequence. He has German officers and German machine-guns at his back and he is putting up a thundering good show against us.

"I don't myself believe in under-estimating or groundlessly abusing one's enemy.

"Englishmen are supposed to be sportsmen and it is not sporting to circulate stories of this sort without being certain of their truth.

"I should have no objection to seeing these remarks in print above my name.

"It is getting infernally hot here nowadays and one comes almost to dread the midday heat. The sun is slap overhead so there is no shade, and where you make shade you are hotter still and collect more flies.

"It is impossible to rest with comfort or even to sit down between 4.30 a.m. and 8.30 p.m. on account of the flies which nearly drive you mad.

"To get any food into your mouth without swallowing one can only be attained by diligent practice. The flies, of course, do not care for a breeze, but when we *do* get a breeze it takes the form of a dust-storm! . . .

"A first batch of 58 Turkish prisoners (*without* rifles and bayonets and *not* chewing their captors' fingers) have just gone by. They look a much finer set of men than I have seen up till now and I hear they are Turkish Regulars.

"Our chaps are awfully bucked with themselves and say we are doing jolly well." . . .

A. C. D.

No word whatever of fear, or shirking the horrors and the tortures, very little indeed about them, and yet no human beings could well have borne more terrible discomforts.

Now how came all this about? It set me thinking—

neither of these lads loved soldiering or fighting—Paxton was of a nervous temperament, so much that he did not like to sleep in a room far removed from the rest of the family—what made them endure these horrors voluntarily and gladly? and what upheld them through it all? I knew that worldly advancement or hope of any gain could not have done this thing—nothing that anyone could have offered could have induced them to accept such a life, but a clear sense of duty that it was better a thousand times to pass through everything that humanity could endure, even to death, rather than to stand by and acquiesce in the triumph of bestial strength and tyranny over righteousness, liberty and freedom. Self was forgotten entirely, all that mattered now was to save the world from once more coming under the heel of tyrants and being thrown back into slavery. And my boys had given themselves a living sacrifice, and having once laid on the altar their joyous youth and all its affection, its mystical hope of a wondrous future, giving up consciously and deliberately all that they had to give, they became as Wordsworth's Happy Warrior—having lost their lives they have gained them everlastingly. And so I realised that life, which brought about such glorious abnegation, such heroic resolution in the soul of man, was not futile, but was worth all the agony and terror and pain that our lads and the lads of a million fathers and mothers had gone through, for it is in such birth agonies that new and greater life is born. Musing so, peace came to us, and in time exaltation and even joy that we had given them to the great fight, and we have tried to bear our great sorrow as gallantly as they gave up everything. There was plenty of work to do, thank God! We had to add their work to ours, my sons and I, and we should have shamed to have left any task undone that they had left to us—so by and by

the old eagerness came back, and life was full and satisfying once again.

Three of our girls, Muriel, Olive and Lexie, started work—Muriel going for a time into a munitions factory of the most terrible kind—and so took their part in the war. We tightened our belts like everyone else, and set our faces like the rest of the nation to endure and overcome.

I persuaded my son John to close down his business and join us, and so as far as possible take on the work of the boys who had left us, and we have weathered the storm together, and though we could not go on with our work upon "Everyman" and many another scheme we kept the ship afloat and looked forward to better times.

The following note by Dr. Wilson relates to this period:

"In the early part of 1915, I had corresponded with Mr. Dent about a fount of type which he had cut for himself; and later in that year took up the task of editing for him some of his educational publications.

"He had the North-countryman's inborn, and somewhat pathetic, reverence for book-learning, coupled with an inordinate respect for the world's 'distinguished' men. For modern science he had a wondering appreciation—I have heard him grow lyrical over the structure of a tree—but he saw clearly that a would-be scientist ought first to be equipped with a literary training, and it was literature in which he placed his trust as an educative power, not that of his own country only but that of humanity in general. If he could only get people to read widely and think deeply! If youth but knew and maturity would not forget! As he grew older his mind looked ever forward, yet his tendency was to draw unwilling or rebellious youth back to the old ways, wisdom which is in the process of justification.

"I imagine that it was because his own craft was at its perfection in the early years of the Renaissance that his sympathies went out to the Middle Ages, but he was a mediaevalist with the bright modernity of Erasmus, More

and Manutius. It is easy to trace the influence of Italian art and of Italian early printing in most of his books; in fact, this is their chief characteristic and their chief claim to an individual place in the story of the book which is yet to be written.

"His favourite personal adjective was "keen," and his keenness was a refreshment in an age bored with its own cleverness. The keen fit was usually succeeded by one of coldness and doubt when he could laugh at his own ardour and tried to measure the dream with the yard-stick. I remember an American professor pacing the room and declaring, 'Mr. Dent, you run well and then you get cold feet!' But many noteworthy volumes stand to witness to his sustained keenness, many ventures coolly undertaken and steadily carried through in the interests of the 'poor scholar' who was always dear to his heart; and this is his chief title of honour.

"His Liberalism was of the non-party type, rather social than political, or political in the Platonic sense, and it permeated not only all his work but his mental and spiritual outlook. He recognised an aristocracy of attainment and achievement which was touched by imagination. His rewards and his recreations were things of the spirit. One of his chief enjoyments was a 'good talk' either with a kindred spirit or with an adversary possessing a sense of humour. He was attracted by what we call the occult, not for mere curiosity but because he longed, like our first printer and publisher, for 'Light, more light!' and was weary and scornful of our poor shibboleths and incantations."

In the autumn of 1916 I went once more to the U.S.A. and Canada, crossing again under war conditions in a Canadian-Pacific boat; it was a so-called second-class boat, but was as comfortable as any other, with perhaps a little less elaborate food, and therefore not so much waste. One of my fellow-passengers was Sir Edward (now Lord) Morris, Premier of Newfoundland, and we became quite intimate on the voyage, talking over our favourite authors. The voyage was pleasant and without incident, except that we had to

wear life-belts and be ready to get into boats at a given signal. I had gone principally about our Canadian business, and especially with regard to negotiation with the State of Quebec, trying to arrange to supply their Protestant Committee with educational books. I had a busy time and went west as far as Edmonton, staying a day or two at Winnipeg and Regina *en route*. At Edmonton I stayed with my friend Mrs. Murphy, who had become the first woman magistrate there and dealt with the women and children cases with very great success. In the next day or two I visited the university and spent an afternoon with the Lord Chief Justice of the state; both he and the president of the university were keenly cultured men and took great interest in all social work, and were wonderfully up to date. I also addressed the Canadian Club of the city and had a good hearing.

I returned via Saskatoon, the university city of Saskatchewan, and met there again a group of interesting men. The city is only some twelve years old, and grew out of a settlement of some religious society. It is situated in a dead level plain where you can see clearly from horizon to horizon, with hardly a tree or hillock in view. In the twelve years of its existence it has grown to a city of some 40,000 inhabitants, with a number of university buildings in English Gothic built in stone — it is the way they do things in Canada and America.

My father had always been most keenly interested in the development and ultimate success of the Toronto house. It was founded early in 1913, under the management of Mr. Henry Button, and after some eight or nine years of uphill work and many disappointments the tide turned and profits were shown each year, instead of substantial losses.

I had never been satisfied with the premises in which

ALDINE HOUSE, TORONTO

the stock and our Canadian staff were housed, so towards the end of 1924 Mr. Button and I discussed the possibility of erecting a building that would house our staff and provide room for steady extension in Canada. Among our many Canadian friends we inquired for the best quarter for a publisher's office, and I came to the conclusion that land would be less costly in the neighbourhood of the university than in the business section, and that our work could be well done in proximity to the university itself. Further, the commercial part of the city was spreading northwards, and in a few years' time our proposed building might be within the business part of Toronto.

No suitable site could be found during my visit in 1924, but during 1925 Mr. Button sent over particulars of some houses in Bloor Street West, opposite the university, which were for sale, and I left London for Toronto in November to inspect the properties. None of them were attractive, but in the same street No. 224 had been put on the market a week before my visit, and after the architect had reported on it I made an offer for the house and land which was accepted. Plans of a one-story building to be added to the front of the house were quickly prepared by the architects, Messrs. George Moorhouse and King, and an excellent facsimile in miniature of the showroom of our London Aldine House was built in six months, and formally opened in October 1926. My father heartily approved of the scheme, although once he thought the outlay of capital might prove for a few years unprofitable. Still, he was keenly interested in the venture, and I regret that photographs of the finished building were not ready until after he had passed from us.

Returning through Boston I was asked by my friend Barrett Wendell to have lunch at a small private club called The Tavern Club, which is used only by Harvard professors, where I met a large company with President Lowell at their head. It was 2 November, but so hot was the day that members had lunch in the open loggia with a screen to keep off mosquitoes, and many were in their shirt sleeves. We were on tip-toe about the presidential election, and betting was more

than two to one on Judge Hughes; indeed it was declared that he was elected that day and the papers cried it next morning, and it was understood all over the States that Wilson had lost, but the western states saved him, and I honestly believe saved our cause in the war. I could not help noticing what a tremendous power the national game had over the people. There did not seem much stir in Boston at the time, but going up Washington Street I found the whole place blocked and the police controlling a tremendous crowd listening to some baseball results declared from a megaphone. The presidential election was as nothing to the baseball match.

I was able to get a few days' rest with my friends the Scudders, who had gone to their holiday cottage in New Hampshire, and I had some interesting talks with a company of university men who came up among the mountains for the vacation. I had many talks and discussions with Miss Scudder about her work in literature and on social questions, and also about educational matters, especially from the college point of view.

CHAPTER XVI

Letters to a Friend—Socialism and Bureaucracy—The Evil of Usury —The Great War—Men and Ants—Travail and Sacrifice—England's Heroism — The Settlement Movement — Autumn and Winter — *The Ring and the Book*—H. G. Wells—"The Church" —Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*—Death the Comforter—Sir Oliver Lodge's *Raymond*—The Life Force—The Chrysalis Body—Sir Henry Newbolt's Report for the Teaching of English—John Drinkwater's Play, *Abraham Lincoln.*

This chapter consists of a selection from my father's letters written to his friend Miss Vida Scudder during the last ten years, which show his attitude to the Great War, his thoughts on the mystery of human life and on Socialism, and his appreciation and love for all things beautiful in Nature and Art.

February 9, 1915

AS to your lecture on Socialism—alas, I am getting further away from you in this idea than ever. I believe that State Socialism would be only another German curse. We begin to see it in our own country as the Government takes up work that was originally done by private sources,—the accumulation of officialism,—the neglect of individual responsibility, —the leaning up against the State,—it all becomes possible even in the small way in which we in England have tried it. In fact, it is just another name for bureaucracy. You can never govern a people like that who are worth governing, and unless you can bring about a change of heart—both nationally and individually—indeed I believe that Socialism would be the biggest curse that could come to the earth; whereas, if the heart is changed there will be no need of your Socialism.

I feel with you the bitterness of what we call poverty. The more closely I inquire into it, the more I see that the State can only remedy a comparatively small percentage of it. So much is owing to physical, intellectual and spiritual disability,—the waste, as it were,—just as an imperfect apple drops to the ground in its immaturity; just as among a thousand seeds that are propagated, only 25 per cent will come to anything. And this somehow is a natural law. I do not know how far it affects the spiritual side; but neither Socialism nor any other remedy will ever put that portion of it right.

Do not think that I am arguing against State responsibility altogether. I believe the State should be responsible to see that every life that comes into the world starts with enough food and clothes—that to some extent it should start them with education too, though I sometimes fear that State education is about as bad as it can very well be. They do not understand real education at all. I sadly fear that a lot of this accounts for this terrible war.

. . . . . .

May I just in one more paragraph say that I believe the evil of our present day life, and in most lives we have lived through, is usury. If you could do away with usury, and let a man have only all that he can earn, you would put your finger upon the great physical sore of the world. It has influenced men to pile up usury, when they are able to get power over men by capital. If there were no interest upon money a man could not —even after he is dead—grind down the worker.

August 31, 1915

It is very difficult indeed for us poor humans to realise how little our imagination rises. We think that we are very big people, and that for a few thou-

sands or millions of us to be destroyed is the greatest catastrophe that comes into God's universe; but you put your foot upon an anthill, and you destroy as many ants by that action as there are consumed of humans in this great war, and both are God's creation,—both are part of a great universe in which they are exceedingly tiny. Oh, all the millions that are being destroyed in this terrible world!

It is not because I want to make you feel, or that I feel, that we are insignificant, any more than the ants are; nor do I want to compare the struggle of the human soul with the day's life of the ant; but in proportion they mean the same thing. Pain is something we strive against, and pain is the common lot of all,—and yet the pain somehow is an evolution, or rather I should call it a development, like birth pains,—like the pains that come to us when we grow.

And I asked myself what was the product of all this, —what does it really mean? Is the world better, so far as we can see, for all this travail? Has there been anything new born into the world from it? And I sat down to read my boys' letters, and I found them so direct and so simple,—found somehow that all their world was bounded by their affection for home, and that their love seemed better and purer than it was when I was a boy. They seemed to have no ulterior motive at all,—nothing but close affection for all those who cared for them. It seemed to me a purer and a deeper thing, and more natural to them, if I may put it so, than it was among the children with whom I lived when I was young; and self-abnegation seemed to them an easier thing altogether than it was to us, when we were children.

It was a little thing perhaps to them, and yet as I brooded over it I said yes, there seems to be more regard for human life and human suffering and human

pain, in spite of the fact that we are passing through the most awful war that has ever been seen upon the earth. And so I felt that there was a product of perfect joy out of the infinite misery.—I do believe the world is better,—even as my boys are better than my father's boys, and I have seen so much of this through all this time of suffering in England that I am content to know that human love is being deepened,—human love is more real and more profound,—and that when the war is over—fought as it is by my beloved country for the sake of righteousness and all that we hold dear—the lives will have been given, not to kill the Germans, but to kill a great evil, and I am content in thinking that my boys were in it, and have indeed been, as you say, happy warriors.

What matters it then if at times one realises that they will never come back to us, and that all our care for their future has been so futile; what does it matter if for the few years of our life here—(and God knows they are short enough now)—this pain will come back to us, and a sob arise which we cannot repress! And so we are happy.

. . . . . .

Well, to turn to the great story of the War,—I wish America knew what England is giving, and what England is doing. Unfortunately, all that is worst comes into the papers, all that is best seems hidden. You Americans seem to think that we are not doing our share. I wonder what Americans would think of their own share when this war is over and they feel what they have done and left undone! We have now sent an army to the Continent almost as big as that of France; we have held the seas, not only for our own good, but for that of America and for all neutral countries; we have found money and means to keep our Allies at the Front; everything that we can do for the wounded and suffering

we are striving after, and though it is not proclaimed in the papers, yet I know it to be there.

Will you tell your friends that I never saw the heroic side of England more clearly shown, and this in face of the fact that there are strikes in industrial quarters, —misunderstandings yet among highly strung people;— wrongs there are still by the employers, wrongs there are too by the employees, and there are some men yet giving their minds to making money out of the war just as you are doing in America; but for all that, the one great central fact stands out, that England knows that she must see this through, or her standing for freedom and righteousness the world through will be gone.

It really is, believe me, a fight against evil, not only for England, but for all the countries engaged. I have a letter from a friend in Italy this morning in which she says, "Oh, the shame of it if Italy had stood out!" She is realising as she never did before that everything for which life is worth living would be gone if the Germans won.

October 19, 1915

It is a great thing for you to teach them Wordsworth, for Wordsworth to me is the man who really knows that there is a meaning in life. You quote from *The White Doe of Rylstone,*—the same thought goes through a great many of his finer poems, like *The Leech Gatherer,* where he stands so sturdily against life— terribly lonesome,—terribly hard,—each day like any other day, and only his own great soul to see any meaning or any forwardness in his living. It is profoundly great for man to get down like this to the roots of being.

. . . . . .

I am at times absolutely in the depths of despair;

but generally speaking I am sane, and have some optimism left even yet; still, the times are very hard to bear. I saw one of my girls in the office here with red eyes the other day, and I found she had just been weeping for a second brother she had lost, and this is the constant and ever-increasing story of nearly every family in the country.

November 18, 1915

I am very thankful that you find the Settlement effort so great in America. When I was in Boston Mr. Woods told me that it was his conviction that the Settlement movement had saved America, or at least had set it on its right footing in the way of working, and again I think he was right. The tremendous change in Chicago which I felt owing to the Settlements in its midst, of earnest people,—clear and intent on their purpose,—had made a marvellous alteration in the city.

And you, my dear friend, have a great share in this wonderful development, and I feel too as if I had something to do with it, which is very helpful to me in these sad times, for I was almost at the very inception of the Settlement movement, and worked my best in old days. I think this good work is sure to tell,—I cannot lose faith in the ultimate destiny of the race. . . .

The winter has set in here very rapidly and suddenly. It was bright autumn, beautiful weather, and the colours were glorious a week ago, and now we have had snow and frost, and all the leaves are falling and we shall have our bare trees. And yet in their very nakedness they are excessively beautiful. I worship trees,—the exquisite lines and tenderness of them are almost too much for my emotion. There is almost a musical rhythm in the very form of them, and they are all of one body, as Paul describes the Christian Church,—all

working together for one harmony,—and the harmony is perfectly marvellous. You do not seek for colour,—you get that from the sky,—and these beautiful delicate lines spread out for us are intensely beautiful at times. I looked out on the garden in the moonlight last night, and I do not think I ever saw anything so divinely beautiful. I wish I could describe it. . . .

For myself, I am longing for that peace "which passeth understanding," and which seems farther off than ever,—and yet I am not altogether restless or fearsome,—I get quiet at times, and hopeful; but I must confess I am not the soldier I ought to be in this great crisis.

June 13, 1916

The great relief one gets here, is to be possessed with one's work. Only give us plenty of work to do and we can even be forgetful of the suffering around us, and feel optimistic enough to believe that the work of our hands will not be in vain.

It is curious that I have just taken up *The Ring and the Book* again—especially my favourite part of "The Pope"—how immensely great it is, that it at least bears the test of being read with new interest every time, and some new and beautiful thought comes from it whenever I turn it up. Is it not perfect to hear this old man talking of Pompilia, and those lovely lines:

> Perfect in whiteness—stoop thou down, my child,
> Give one good moment to the poor old Pope
> Heart-sick at having all his world to blame—

and then our hope arises when he calls her:

> My flower,
> My rose, I gather for the breast of God;

and going back again to that other,—

> The Marvel of a soul like thine, earth's flower
> She holds up to the softened gaze of God!

The very fact that Pompilia has lived has given him confidence that there is yet absolute power of purity in the human heart, and the great fight she made when it was not for herself, but a yet unborn child—the life which must go on and she must defend and save. How *splendid* the old Pope is, how *magnificent* in looking back on life which he as Pope could see and feel and touch, and standing on the brink of the new life, looking forward, wondering whether all the maelstrom of human conflict and pain and suffering and sin would still go forward into that clear world to which his Soul aspired.

However, I must not keep on talking about books. When once one gets on books, one makes letters long enough to be dreary. I am thankful enough at this time to get them—I go to bed with Wordsworth almost every night, though I cannot read long I always get some comfort.

December 29, 1916

I have just been reading Wordsworth again with great hope. Do you remember in those Essays on his poetry how he claims that the central thought of life is joy and that all things can be explained in that light; that through all his long life he found it out and sang it, though he sang of suffering too, and joy through suffering. I have been finding it out in all his poems and I think this has been a great comfort to me. No life but what has something of it—no life was intended for anything else, and really I have begun to believe in it thoroughly myself. There is even in pain and suffering and sacrifice a distinct purposeful joy, if I may put it so; that is to say, it comes out of a determination to look upon life as a purposeful thing with something in it which is joyful in itself.

I wonder if you understand me? I am afraid I

stumble very much in these letters, but I do want you to feel that I am getting subsistence out of this poetry as I have never done before. . . .

Life here is very difficult and getting more so with us every week that passes. It is difficult to get about the country because they have cut down the number of trains and raised the railway fares by 50 per cent. We cannot get the material to do our work with—either paper or leather, and of course what we can get is very expensive, and so we find it very difficult to get along, but I am hoping still that the war will be over before we have to shut down. Everybody is doing his very best here, and we are going to put all our energies into the next year's work.

May 12, 1917

One thing that encourages me is that I think the spiritual movements are stirring. You see that even Wells has found some kind of a God of his own. I wonder if you have got his last book? I would like you to read it and let me know what you think about it. I am sure you can easily obtain it from the library, but you will be entirely at daggers drawn and indignant when you find he repudiates Christ as a milksop and all the rest of it. I wish I myself could find some more intensive experiences. It feels as if all one's sensibilities, emotions, and everything else that stands for humanity are dulled and seared over. We have passed through so many agonies that they have become every-day experiences, and the soul lies battered and half unconscious under them. But the day will dawn soon, I hope. Those old Scripture words come back to me—"The Lord will arise and scatter his enemies"; the light will shine, and renewed activities will come when these days are over. It is strange how children

never seem to feel, not even Olive, so far as she can express it, she seems to be full of gaiety and gladness in her young life, and I suppose that triumphs over everything. What sometimes worries me is my own eagerness about the expansion and development of my business. I once thought I never could have taken any interest in it more, but it seems almost irresistible. When you feel that a thing should be done you want to be doing it, in spite of the calamities and all the spiritual and mental pain.

I wonder whether these little meditations of mine bore you. You must tell me if they do; and I really wonder how your quick and sensitive nature is wearing at this time. I have been reading your little book on the Church, but to be quite honest with you, it does not impress me like your great eagerness when writing on a theme like the *Morte d'Arthur*. One feels the trail of the conventions around you when you address the Church and so on, although your passion for the liberty of the people and for wider thought is quite evident. You see, I am almost a revolutionist with regard to Church matters. I feel as if we cannot seem to stir the Church out of its somnolence. A few men here and there start up and see the folly of our going on, as it were, but they are so very, very few, and the orthodox ones sit in their chairs calmly looking on, with perhaps a hand held out to help some wounded soldier, but there they stop. I cannot help agreeing with Wells to some extent that the Church itself cannot be reconstructed—it must be re-made.

June 20, 1917

I am keeping bees, you know, and the economy of the hive is a strange wonder. There is no thought in the bee for itself at all; it acts as only part of the

community,—its only thought is the coming race. It works day in and day out to provide pollen to feed the new bees on, which only live six weeks. It stores up honey which it cannot eat itself. It lives, not as a hero or as an individual, but as only part of one living, great community. And the queen bee above all, the queen who produces all the young! I think somehow that is what we shall have to feel like in the coming days, but I dread the loss of the individual. Looking back into all history one seems to feel that although the community gives birth, as it were, to genius and power, yet the power must be individual and definite, and man must be free, as it were, to make his own life. Between these two great objectives, or rather I should say, between the subjective and the objective, I am quite at sea, but still I know that only by one continual spiritual pressure by the whole race can good be born into the world, and I must sink with everybody else my own individual life with that object, and that object alone.

June 27, 1917

How I thank you for the letter, which I shall keep while I keep anything. It is so good to know that there is big enough charity in both our hearts to understand and to feel an interest in different points of view, even while the essentials are possessed by us both like a strong rock which nothing can break through. My talk about the Church, for instance, is only because my mind is continually fixed upon her, looking to her for the strength which we so sorely need and for the direction which we cannot find for ourselves. And, alas! both are wanting, at least, so it seems to me, and one blames somehow the members of the Church, while it is the institution which wants entirely rebuilding.

I went to an Anglican church on Sunday and found great comfort in much of its service, and one great thing is its submission and absolute dependence upon God. That is what we all come to when everything else fails, as everything else seems to be failing now.

I somehow feel that it is just the hour before the dawn, which is always the most dire and fearful, and I am making myself strong in hope, and why should I not, for America is to be with us, and what makes me so strong in hope about that is that it is not for this war alone, but for once the nations are banded together with one great distinct purpose. I do hope that you will be strong enough to keep the spiritual side always to the front. I know that in the doing of this the body must be given up. There must be shedding of blood, that is to say, there must be a getting rid of the carnal, if any great object is to be obtained, and surely the purpose of it all is great enough to call for all the spiritual force that we can bring to bear upon it. No nation is pure; we are not, I am sure. That is to say, our moneyed classes are still convinced that the power of money is everything, and they scruple at nothing to gain it, but I will tell you at once that after all these years I have a strong conviction that the heart of England is pure; that is to say, the great bulk of the middle class, as we call them, who are the backbone of the nation, are earnestly striving to keep the nation in righteousness and this is so largely, too, with our better working-classes. They do not see very far, but they are religious and they will be a great force in the future.

. . . . . .

All these days ought to be spent in church, night and day, like an acolyte. We want to prepare our souls for the day. We have had the endurance and test, but our spirits are not yet broken, and a new hope is now breaking within us, not unmingled with a great

fear. But right, I am sure, is going to prevail, and not only right, but tenderness and forgiveness when these terrible days are passed.

July 17, 1917

I have been enjoying my garden intensely the last few days. It has been a marvellous joy of colour and light and shade. You know, the old man gardener who made it one hundred years ago must have chosen with great care all the trees so that they gave delicate shades of colour and contrast. A copper beech beside a beautiful cedar; a great monkey-tree on the other side, beginning, as it were, a procession of colour from all the varieties of green to a golden yellow-green maple. Nothing that I ever saw has refreshed me so much of late; and the flowers! The mad riot of roses absolutely crushing out the green leaves, and all the tender homeliness of it makes one's heart ache doubly when one thinks of the horrors of the war. And yet I have been reading, as perhaps you have read, that *Raymond* of Sir Oliver Lodge's. Perhaps it has startled you and rebuffed you, but he has a chapter on life and death which has helped me exceedingly, where the only purpose of life seems to be to prepare for death, or, as Longfellow calls it, transition. If only we could make people understand that death is the *crowning* of life in that it is the opening into a fuller, more expansive understanding, then how differently people would live! Why cannot we make Death, as Lodge would have us understand it, the comforter, the healer, the one who opens doors? That "door in the wall" of H. G. Wells suggests something of the idea. I feel that Sir Oliver has, in his scientific, quiet way, made me see what I never have seen quite before—that all life might be spent looking forward joyfully to death. I had a young

friend who died in the war—a young parson—who wanted to die! How grand it would be to die! And he died a week after he went into the trenches. He seemed to have conceived the idea that death was an opening and not a closing.

July 27, 1917

I am delighted that you are having such a glorious holiday—a holiday for the gods—among those mountains, which I have only seen as I passed through them on the railway. I envy you far more, however, the freedom of your limbs that enables you to climb, and climb and climb! I would give all I am worth if I was a free agent in that way to go where I willed and to do what I wished. A little walking makes me feel as if I had some clogs of wood chained to my ankles which hold me back.

My own impression from the train of these mountains was that they were too austere and appeared more as symbols of calamity and awe than of the joy of the morning. But you, going up their sides, find them at home with all their loved ones round them—even Brer Wolf and Sister Bear.

Oh! it would have been a delightful picture to have seen you and Florence running from that imitation wolf! I will write to St. Francis about it and tell him. He could be deliciously sarcastic you know, when he liked, and to see the intellectual and all-powerful feminine running from a poor little prairie coyot would have been a fine opportunity for him.

I hope that you will come back from it all with strong hearts and healthy bodies and with more zest in life than ever.

As to your not being mystical, I disagree. You are constantly in the mysterious. I have derived any

amount of help from you and I only wish I had as much insight into it and as much sympathy as you have. Still, I am going that way. I am getting more sure-footed every day as my feet trend towards the Unknown, and I shall not turn my back or have a single fear when the Opener of the Gate arrives.

I have been reading again (I expect you will quite disagree with me) that book of Sir Oliver Lodge's, *Raymond*. To you and me, who have not much sympathy with the occult, it may not be very convincing, yet it is to me in some ways, when Sir Oliver Lodge writes as he does, for I know him, and I know that he is a completely sane man, and he loved his boy. I do not know whether I shall not try myself to get into touch with my boys as he has with his. But apart altogether from this, he has a wonderful chapter on "Life and Death" where he presents Life not as mere force, but as the presiding genius of force. Life is not force itself, but it is the director of force. It stands outside mere protoplasm and yet makes it what it is, giving it power to add cell to cell. It is a wonderful thought to me. It brings back that idea, you know, of God breathing into Adam's nostrils the breath of life. And then he says that Death has nothing whatever to do with the death of life. It has only to do with the dissolution of matter which has served its purpose for life, and life goes on while the inanimate body is like a chrysalis, and the old Greeks felt it that way too. It cannot retard life's progress. Anyhow, it came to me quite fresh and helped me very much, and it tallies with my own feelings. I do not find any less animation in my own life. It is only when I want to move quickly that I feel I am not so young as I was, but so far as youthfulness is concerned I seem to be very eager and more than ever desirous to be at work. This is a very different thing from the poor body which limps along

as best it can. Yes, I am sure indeed that life is indestructible and personality is indestructible, and that gives me great rejoicing.

I will not soil this letter with war troubles. Russia, in spite of our hopes, is going through the usual agonies of a great revolution, and people are so foolish and weird in their ideas and seem to forget, as we are trying to forget, that we cannot live as nations or as free people unless we pay the price.

February 10, 1922

It was very pleasant to have your sunny letter again and to feel that things were passing happily with you. I am glad myself to feel that the winter is passing and soon we shall hear the turtle in the land—(not Mark Twain's turtle, by the by). I have watched the shoots in the garden and they are breaking, but it is going to be a late spring with us for there is hardly a daffodil above ground, yet when one can see the trees in this wonderful London haze of winter-time it is a very marvellous thing. Oh! the trees do speak some poetry to me, I assure you, and if I had only an articulate tongue to express what they make me feel *I* might possibly write some poetry—but you need not be frightened, it never will appear. There is such grace and beauty in every twig of a tree, somehow, when nature has its own way with it, that it always did and always will awake emotion in me—there is such artistry —such perfectly charming lines which the great trunk seems to be busy with all the time, and so it sings a song of praise like every creation of the Almighty. And I am watching for the buds and the breaking and all that wondrous soft green which first creeps over the tree before the foliage really breaks — the beautiful olive green which comes about the trunk and every part

of the tree. I do not wonder at Ruskin going into ecstasies and using such wonderful words to express what he felt about this growth. Some of the more ponderous trees like the oak, even when fully grown, have still this delicacy and tracery in the smaller branches. It looks as if everything in nature was striving after beauty, and not only beauty but tenderness, softness and gentleness. Nobody seems to have deified or made a real personality of beauty for there seems to be beauty in all directions. I suppose we cannot have beauty without ugliness or we should not know what beauty was—antithesis must always be if we want to know good from evil. This eagerness in our natures to go forward against something that we have to battle with is clearly an indication that it is by such means we are to get rid of all the crudeness of our natures. Really this looks like preaching—but I am not—I am simply meditating a little as I write and you know all I have said, but I am sure you do not mind me saying it over again. . . .

I wonder if I ever sent you a copy of the wonderful report that Sir Henry Newbolt made for the Government. He was Chairman of the Committee and this is their scheme for the coming years in English teaching. If I have not sent it I will do so with this letter. It is the most inspiriting and helpful thing that I have come across for years and if the Government had got more backbone, or at any rate if the Education Minister really spoke his mind properly, it would come about in the English schools. I hope, at any rate, that this will keep the language pure and dignified and make literature for the ages to come. America must do what it likes. I cannot say that it has improved the English language, but it has brought a certain amount of vigour to it and idiom which, though it does sometimes seem crude, yet is very expressive. I do hope that you have got

Newbolt's *Anthology*—it is such a pageant of literature —it is so glorious that however it may fail in representing it all—for it does that as Sir Henry has brought no humour into it—not a line of Falstaff, I do not know why—but it is great and invigorating, and it makes us humble to look back upon what we did accomplish and what we are accomplishing. Some people have faith that the poetry of to-day in England is going to be something, but I look and look and find nothing that touches me or makes me think of great poetry at all. Masefield is one of the best men but even he brings us no new message. The greatest thing that I think we have done lately has been that wonderful play *Abraham Lincoln*. I think Drinkwater has really brought something vigorous and helpful into modern drama. It is a new venture and it is very dignified, and they tell me his *Cromwell* is finer still—but here I am going on gossiping, and this is mail day and you won't get this letter if I do not stop.

CHAPTER XVII

The Quest Oversea—A William James Volume—Yale and Columbia Universities—Our American Allies—New York—Manhattan—The Swarming of the Human Hive—Home Again—Retrospective—Memories and Portraits—My Brothers, Hugh Railton and Jim—My Friend Evans—Paxton Hood: a Worshipper of Swedenborg and a Grand Preacher—Stopford Brooke—H. G. Wells's First Novel, *The Wonderful Visit*—Dean Hole—W. H. Hudson, Joseph Conrad and Sir Edward Grey—A True Servant of Literature: Arthur Burrell—Some American Friends: Barrett Wendell; Professor Felix Schelling; Professor Dewy; Walter Page, the American Ambassador.

The Memoir at this point takes up again the writer's story of his characteristic quest oversea for "Everyman" volumes and available authors, and his interesting contact with new American acquaintances.

IN New York I met for the first time Mr. Henry James (the son of William James), with whom, by his own generosity, I was able to arrange for a volume of selections of his father's works published in Everyman's Library under the editorship of my friend Professor Bakewell of Yale, and again I visited Yale and Columbia Universities, meeting many old friends. I was given a luncheon by the Publishers' Association, and a most cordial greeting, and their members asked me to tell of the difficulties the English publishers were experiencing for want of paper and labour. They expressed their sympathy with the Allies and especially with Great Britain. Indeed they felt we were fighting their battles. Major G. Haven Putnam, a veteran of the Civil War, had tramped the country urging American entrance into the war, and has always been a keen

advocate for the close relationship of the two countries. I may as well say here that again in August 1918 I was called to America, and fortunately for me had as my state-room companion my friend Mr. Fullerton Waldo, who had been so good to me on my voyage home in 1915. He took great care of me and made me very comfortable. We had, however, to put up with many inconveniences, especially when we got to Liverpool, for we had to wait five days before sailing, going out with a convoy and taking ten days to get to New York. This visit was most interesting, for America was at war and I saw its signs everywhere. The harbour was full of men-of-war, every dock was turned into a ship-building yard. I saw at one railway siding a hundred locomotives ready for Europe. The streets were full of soldiers and sailors. Regiments were constantly marching through the streets and the traffic to the docks was tremendous.

One afternoon my friend Macrae drove me right across the city from north to south, so that we crossed every avenue. It was about 6 p.m., when the city was pouring out its millions of workers on their way home —though I am a Londoner of fifty years' standing and have seen the City in all its phases I remember nothing so stupendous. As everyone knows, the millions of New York are confined to the Island of Manhattan, and all the great activities are crowded into that small area, and in consequence people are hived closely and houses are run up much higher than our buildings, while the skyscrapers rise to forty and fifty stories in some cases. You can imagine what it is like when the whole of this mass empties itself suddenly on to the pavements and moves almost in one direction. It is literally like the swarming of a hive of human bees. Every street and avenue seems alive; so great is the crowd that you feel as if the whole city, houses and

people were moving together—for the pavement is one mass of people, while the roadway is one solid block of traffic of all descriptions, lorries carrying war material, tramcars, motor-cars, all apparently rushing to the sea, while overhead you hear the rumble and clanging of the elevated railway. It is at once awe-inspiring, almost terrorising, yet full of exaltation at the same moment. It seemed impossible that Germany, realising what this terrific force of humanity could mean, should ever have risked America coming into the war as an enemy, for it seemed that no power on earth could stem a tide so irresistible. Indeed the city itself that autumn day in the sunset seemed the very apotheosis of human power and glory—the wide avenues of houses with their massive towers of buildings were lit up in blood-red glow from west to east by the setting sun which, reflected from glass windows in every building, made every roof look as if it were crowned with glory from the heavens, while its multitudes of men and women poured from every building, street and avenue, converging and dispersing with an eager activity. What was Rome compared with this new world built in a hundred years? The New World to redress the Old! Nay, to overwhelm it—for in one generation more, filled as it will be with the vitalised energy of the best blood of the world, what shall stand against it! One can only pray that it will revitalise and inspire this weary Europe into a hope and outlook where righteousness and truth go hand in hand with freedom.

One of my great privileges as a publisher of thirty years' standing or more has been to meet men of all kinds, and had I a ready pen it would be a delightful task to give some of their portraits as they appeared to me and affected my life. Most of those for whom I have cared I am glad to say are still living, and too personal sketches might not in all cases be agreeable.

Many of them I have mentioned in this short story, but I cannot resist the temptation to call up the faces of my old friends which have grown wrinkled like my own, and some who have already passed beyond and whose activities are no longer cribbed, cabined and confined by their outworn flesh.

But before I turn to men outside my own blood, let me tell something of brother chums who helped my life in its beginning, and out of the long past let me bring first to remembrance my brother Hugh Railton, to whom I came when I was a lad of seventeen or eighteen, and for whose helpful care of me in those first years of my life in London I can never be thankful enough. This brother of mine was intellectually an average man with no distinctive ability, neither was he free from the weakness and sin of humanity—he loved his life as much as any of us, and the good things of it too. He had accepted the religious views of his father, and particularly of his mother, whose ardent faith he inherited. And he worked in a little church with all his might, and kept well within its creed. This was the outward show of the man, and he appeared to most men like one of many thousands of devoted nonconformists whose bent in life drifted that way; but I *knew* my brother, and I know how deep his nature was and how true his heart—how whole-heartedly he loved, how free he was from self, how he fought with the lions and wild beasts of his own temptation, and how big a fight he put up for the purity of his own soul. I have felt the power of his goodness all through my own struggle, and poor as my own fight has been, it might have failed altogether but for his example. It is wonderful how green his memory is among the little community with whom he worked fifty years ago. Greybeards who were members of his class still hold him in sweet remembrance.

My brother Jim, too — what should I have done without him all these years? What chums we have been in spite of differences of temperament and environment! How could I write a word about my own life without telling something of what he has been to me! In all the years of trouble through which we both passed, we were one in joy; what made me glad made him glad also, and nothing ever came between us. I have other brothers and sisters dear enough to me, close and loving enough, but these two brothers were part of my very life, and I could not write this story without telling of their goodness and help to me.

My earliest helper in my publishing life was my friend Evans, a friend of thirty years' standing to whom I have already testified,—who helped me to appreciate many authors old and new. How we used to revel in the short stories of Kipling, only just then trickling through from India—and Kipling has never written anything finer to this day in my belief—Stevenson's *Essays*, Meredith (his first editions then quite cheap), Thompson, Browning, and he would fain have pulled me through Swedenborg if I had had brains enough to comprehend. It was all a new world to me into which I might never have fully entered but for his enthusiastic help.

In the years when my first wife was taken ill I made the acquaintance of Paxton Hood and his wife, which ripened into a friendship for which I can never be grateful enough, and I named my fourth son after him. He had the most wonderfully joyous and ecstatic nature I have ever met—living his life like a bird—always longing to be above the clouds—singing in the sunlight. His preaching was a kind of ecstasy, and he was acutely sympathetic. He often forgot all about the sermon he had prepared, and would spend the time in expounding the psalms or the chapter he had read,

or would be carried away by the prophet-poets of the Bible. His face was the face of a cherubic saint and his life was of that nature—he very largely forgot worldly matters, much to the trouble of his dear wife, who had very hard work to keep him within the bounds of his comparatively small income. Good and true friendship did they give me, and when my little wife passed away Mrs. Hood gave one comfort out of her own sorrow. Like my friend Evans, Paxton Hood was an admirer of Swedenborg, Jacob Boehme and the mystics, whose atmosphere served to increase my faith in the "All-Pervading" and to give me understanding, until I, too, learnt to dream dreams along with my friends.

Of Stopford Brooke I have already spoken, who was at this time preaching in his own Bedford chapel, a free-lance in theology, but a worshipper of Christ and all beautiful thought, art and nature. If Stopford Brooke had had more of the dramatic in his action and utterance he would have made one of the greatest of orators, outstripping most of his contemporaries; as it was, it was an uplifting experience to listen to his perfect rhythmical sentences, so full of poetic expression of deep thought.

As the years went on I naturally met many authors —some of whom were already famous and others who became famous in after years. Of Augustine Birrell and Austin Dobson I have spoken, as well as Andrew Lang and Edmund Gosse, who helped me in the earlier years of publishing. They were already well known, but when we published H. G. Wells's first novel, *The Wonderful Visit,* he was only just being discovered; while I think we were the first to publish for Maurice Hewlett. Later I came to know Hilaire Belloc and G. K. Chesterton; somehow the two names seem inseparable, but it is always delightful still to keep in touch with them and with John Masefield and many

another personality. Later still I came to know Dean Hole and Sir Edward Grey, W. H. Hudson, and last of all and perhaps greatest of all, Joseph Conrad—and whatever may be said of all the others, I venture to prophesy that these three last named will remain among the classic writers of English as long as the language lasts. A host of other names—some not known to a large public—come to me as I write, who in pure service to literature have helped me in the choice of books for publishing. I need not mention my friend Ernest Rhys, with his wide knowledge of English and Celtic literature, and his generous appreciation of all true literary effort, who found the title "Everyman," and has been such a sympathetic editor of the Library to which I have almost entirely given these last fifteen years of my life. I must not forget Philip Wicksteed, one of the truest and the most unselfish of men, who has "looked into the life of things" more deeply, perhaps, than many of the men with whom I have come closely into contact; and Thomas Okey and Edmund Gardner, both now Professors of Italian at Cambridge and London. Again, Arthur Burrell, true servant of literature, who deemed no effort too great to do her service. But the names are too many, and what a glorious company of apostles they are, these scholars who preach the gospel of literature with a pure heart and without taint of self-glory. I wish I had the power to express the gratitude I personally owe them, or to plead with eloquent pen that the gospel they have given their lives to preach is the way of salvation for all those who follow it faithfully.

His friendship with Conrad and Hudson in their later years was a source of inspiration and pleasure to him during the last dozen years of his life. It began as a business connection which quickly ripened into mutual respect and

admiration. On Conrad's few visits to London he always came to see the pater. As my office was then alongside my father's I often heard the sounds of an exciting talk, usually on literature, but later about the war and the many aspects of it which directly affected them both. He felt Conrad's death as a close personal bereavement as well as a great loss to English literature. Hudson he had met many years before seeing Conrad, but the former rarely came to the office until after 1912. It was in 1900 that we took over from another publisher *The Naturalist in La Plata* and *Idle Days in Patagonia*, and we bought the copyrights of them from Hudson, but we heard little of him for the next dozen years and then my father had some talk and correspondence about the autobiographical MS. which he commenced. After seeing the first chapter my father urged him to go on with the book and as an incentive made him a good offer for the copyright. It had the desired effect, for *Far Away and Long Ago* was completed in 1918.

In some things they were as the poles apart, but there was much in the life of each that was of real interest to the other. And for both there was the great common bond of English literature.

I hardly dare begin a list of my American friends who in the same high cause have helped me most generously, but I must mention Barrett Wendell, the late Professor of English Literature at Harvard, who, though he has never written anything for my publication, has been an enthusiastic helper almost from the beginning of my work on "Everyman"; Professor Santayana, profound scholar, philosopher and true gentleman; Professor Schelling of Philadelphia; Professor Dewey of Columbia; Professor Trent, pro-German though he turned out to be, yet one of the kindest and best of fellows, who held with tenacious courage to his opinions in the face of the opposition of the whole of his university. But these are only a few of the names that come quickly to my memory when I review the happy and exciting times I spent with them in my pilgrimage on behalf of

"Everyman." I must not forget before I close this chapter to tell of an American friend whose goodness to me I can never forget, and whose appreciation of the possibilities of the work I was doing gave me impetus during the early years of the war to go on in the face of every difficulty, because he insisted that if ever men needed the consolation of books it was in the terrible days we were passing through. I write of Walter Page, the late American Ambassador, and editor and publisher. I can never forget the comradeship his wife and he showed us when we lost our two sons—and must tell how in the midst of a terrible turmoil of work they found time to drive many miles to give us comfort in our bereavement.

Here is another wonder of America. A man who had spent his life in literary work, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, founder of the *World's Work*, etc., who had little experience of political life, and none of diplomacy, is suddenly called to represent his country in Great Britain, the highest diplomatic appointment in its gift. And through the five years of his work—four of which covered the period of the war and in three of which he had charge of German affairs in this country—although many knotty and dangerous questions arose between America and ourselves which fell to him to settle, yet there is no record of a false step, or a rash statement or mistake in diplomatic action! What other country could have sent us such a man? He was the successor of many such men, nearly all of literary attainment of a high order, but not specially trained, yet each helped to draw closer the bonds between America and our own country, and through many difficult negotiations brought about peaceful and happy understandings.

CHAPTER XVIII

"This Day is called the Feast of Crispian"—Visit to the Commander-in-Chief—A Boyish Memory—The Horse Guards—Eastcote—Men of the Stage—Sir Frank Benson—Stratford-on-Avon—A University of Drama—Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson—A Delightful Raconteur—*Coriolanus*—A Quiller-Couch Anecdote—One more Enterprise, The Kings Treasuries—Sir A. T. Quiller-Couch as Editor—An Anthology of English Literature—*A Shakespeare Progress*—Last Scheme of all.

ON 11 December, 1919, I was invited by the Commander-in-Chief to have luncheon at his home at Eastcote. When I received his kindly invitation a detached sort of feeling came over me. It seemed like a dream. In these later years of mine I have met, and in many cases hobnobbed freely, with men of high estate—with a Lord Chancellor even, with Earls and Viscounts, with Ministers of State, with Ambassadors of this and other countries. Many of these meetings and acquaintances I owe to my craft as publisher, but also to my association with them in useful and philanthropic work. And I found them very human, if not always as intellectually great as I expected—and this of course is the experience of every man nowadays who has touch with public life. But to be asked to meet the man who had held chief command of our armies in the most terrible war the world has known, who had borne the responsibility of sending millions of men into battle for three awful years, whom no difficulty or defeat could discourage, and who fought dauntlessly, with quiet, cool courage, until the hosts were driven back and the victory achieved! Well, this was a possibility of which I had

never dreamed; I owed this of course entirely to the fact that I had published in volume form the complete dispatches which from time to time the great commander had sent home through those fateful years, and it was a kindly thought of his to give me this great pleasure.

When I came, a lad, to London town, I went up Whitehall to see the Horse Guards, and beheld with awe two monumental men on horseback guarding the gates; they seemed, to my boyish mind, to symbolise the might and power of England—to be oblivious of common people and far outside the common life—set apart as it were to symbolise the power of the nation, not as part of *us*, but belonging to a different species, set apart not only to fight and defend us, but to hold us in awe and govern us. And somehow this feeling never quite left me, and it was with some temerity I approached one of these majestic beings to ask the way to the Commander-in-Chief's offices, for I was asked to meet him there. When I was ushered in I found a very quiet, unpretentious, work-a-day room, prepared clearly for business, and the great commander himself dressed in simple khaki, difficult to distinguish from any of his staff. He met me without the least official side or stand-offishness—I might have been an old acquaintance whom he was glad to see again. My imagination had conjured up a man aloof—how could he be common clay who had borne the awful responsibility of his great office, and held the fate of the great empire in his hands through three terrible years?—but there was not a sign of aloofness upon him; like Duncan, he had borne "his faculties so meek," and been "so clear in his great office." Sitting by his side as we drove out of the gates in his car, with Life Guardsmen saluting him, my boyish feeling came back upon me and I seemed as if I were dreaming.

The gap of years which had passed since first I

looked upon that awe-inspiring sight of the Life Guardsmen was as nothing, and I seemed still the lad who was serving his apprenticeship as a bookbinder down East —it was a funny sensation, but very real at the time. General Frederick Maurice was a guest also, and clearly an old chum, for they called each other by their Christian names. We drove for some three-quarters of an hour through London, and talked on all kinds of subjects, but especially about the distress of many demobilised officers, and the fund the commander was trying to raise, and the means he was using for their relief. He had many sad stories to tell, and was not without indignation at their treatment by the Government. Indeed in this matter there seemed no love lost between him and the Government. But his pride in the British Army, in the common soldier, was unbounded. When we arrived at Eastcote, it was delightful to see a perambulator in the veranda, and to be welcomed by Lady Haig and her two babies—you see I was still under the delusion that the Commander-in-Chief could hardly be human in the ordinary sense, much less have anything to do with babies! But the delusion was entirely dispelled when I discovered that the *pièce de résistance* at lunch was Irish stew, and I descended from the clouds once and for all. He discussed the war openly, and indeed spoke of things which I think would be a breach of confidence to write here until they have been made public property by himself. While General Maurice and myself enjoyed our cigars (the commander does not smoke) he took us into his map room and described one or two of the great battles, especially the great forward movement which gave us victory, and showed how divisions were placed and made me understand vividly how completely the power of Germany was broken. In all this one could not help feeling how much of the boy was left in him still, and

how completely he could throw off the shackles of office and be a good comrade and a delightful host. I presume he is of Scottish birth, but there was no sign of that careful reserve we associate with the North Briton — he seemed typically English in his open frankness.

To turn now from a great soldier to a famous actor. At various times I came into touch with many men of the stage, both writers and players, more especially with Frank Benson, a pioneer in popular Shakespeare performances, who has paid great attention to the speaking of the blank verse of the master. I spent two whole Easter weeks at Stratford-on-Avon, and often discussed with him some favourite topics in Shakespeare.

For some time I had been obsessed with the idea that Stratford-on-Avon should stand for a University of Drama, and that all students who were taking English at the universities, or even matriculation in the upper schools, should spend three or four weeks in the long vacation at Stratford, where they might get more insight into drama than they could at the universities. My plan was that in the morning there should be lectures given by, say, Sir Gilbert Murray, or some other Professor of Greek drama, and these should be illustrated at night by one or two Greek plays. And so with lectures in the morning and plays at night illustrating particular periods, the students would be given a full and clear conception of the drama as it has come down through Greek and Roman to that of the Church —miracle and morality plays—and then to the development of the Romantic drama up to modern times. I put my views before Frank Benson—as he was then—one morning at breakfast, and he was so taken by my suggestion that he determined I should lay it before a meeting of his supporters in Stratford that night, and he busied himself to arrange a meeting in the picture

gallery of the Shakespeare Memorial after the play, which happened to be *Coriolanus*. I attended the play and saw Benson as Coriolanus struck down at the end, and then went into the picture gallery to prepare for saying a few words to his friends. I found the gallery nearly full, but no Benson, and the meeting waited somewhat impatiently for his appearance, as the time passed and he did not turn up. At last inquiries were made, and eventually he came up in the costume of Coriolanus with a bloody sheet round his neck. He apologised for his late attendance and explained that an actor had really stabbed him with a sliding sword which failed in its sliding action, so that we very nearly had a second tragedy of Coriolanus. However, after his appearance we settled down and discussed the thing very fully. Since then I am glad to say—almost ten years later—I have seen Mr. Flower and he believes it to be a practical scheme, and I hope that it may still be carried out.

Another delightful character I met on board the steamer coming back from America was Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson. We enjoyed many hours discussing the drama and literature, and they were indeed the most pleasant hours I spent on the crossing. He is a most delightful raconteur and a charming personality, as everybody knows who has had the good fortune to meet him. I twitted him with the fact that he was going to rest though the public deplored that he was retiring from the stage. "Now, Sir Johnston," I said, "you will be able to destroy some more canvases and make some pictures." "Ah!" he said, "you do not know I have four daughters."

I cannot resist the temptation to tell another story of Sir Johnston. At a Shakespearian gathering, when Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch was reading a paper with some such title as "Shakespeare as a Poet," Sir Johnston

was in the chair. Before he went on to the platform he turned to me and said, "Ah, Quiller-Couch: I know him, but what did he do? He wrote some stories, didn't he—wrote some novels?" I said, "Yes, he wrote one or two novels and very many short stories." "Ah, yes, yes, that is all right." When Quiller-Couch had delivered his address and Sir Johnston was called upon to thank him he said, "When I am tired out after a hard day's work and I put my slippers on and rest in my old arm-chair, I take up one of Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch's lovely and perfect stories, and at once I am at peace and in Elysium."

I must tell of one more enterprise amidst several which has given me real satisfaction, and which I hope has met the desires of the earnest school-teacher who loves our great literature. It accords strangely with the Report which the Government Committee on the Teaching of English has lately sent out and which is to be adopted in the schools. I have long hoped to put into school-children's hands a series of books which they would love, not task-books or text-books, but real aids to delight and learning, and should contain things beautiful, both new and old, from the store-house of our own great literature with some translations from other tongues. The books were to be small, entirely unlike the regulation school-book, as attractive as I could make them, and so cheap that they should not be out of the reach of any young scholar, or indeed older scholar who cared for good reading. This series of "Kings Treasuries of Literature" has been produced under the editorship of Sir A. T. Quiller-Couch, assisted by Dr. Richard Wilson, who entered enthusiastically into my plan and to whom I am much indebted for his careful and conscientious work on the editorial side of the enterprise.

With the older classics we mingled volumes by many

modern writers from whom I obtained leave to include some of their best work, notably Thomas Hardy, Joseph Conrad, W. H. Hudson, William Canton, Sir Henry Newbolt, Walter de la Mare, and Hugh Walpole. We have already issued in less than two years seventy-five volumes, and would have done more had there not been a very strict and rigorous economy enforced in the sale of school-books, so that we have had to ca' canny for the time being, yet I am sure from the enthusiasm with which the series has been received that we may go on adding to it for many years.

Another service which I hope the house has done to advance the knowledge of our native tongue has been through an anthology of English literature which Sir Henry Newbolt arranged for us, and which by its carefully chosen extracts from the fourteenth century to the end of the nineteenth displays the gradual development of the language and literature almost down to date. It is a glorious book, and well may England be proud of what it represents.

I, too, have been meddling with anthologies, and have compiled a little book containing Shakespeare extracts in chronological order to show the development of the poet's mind and the growth of thought from his earliest play to the last.[1] Perhaps I may repeat here in brief my idea of what a chronological "Shakespeare Progress" might do to represent his own life in his plays.

"It brings you into close touch with the all-pervading human personality of the greatest poet that ever lived; it lends a new and exciting interest to the study of the plays to feel that you are watching closely the development of such a master mind; you recognise the recurrence of little idiosyncrasies of style and the gradual elimination of weaknesses; and you realise as

[1] *A Shakespeare Progress.* Showing the Growth of the Poet's Mind and Art. The Kings Treasuries of Literature.

never before the compelling and growing moral and humanitarian force right to the end of the work. Moreover the chronological reading has strengthened my belief that Shakespeare was a teacher by premeditation and design, that not only did his plays serve as 'chronicles of the time,' but he used each of them to teach a lesson and to point a moral. From the early historical plays like *Henry VI.*, in which he paints the terror and misery of civil war, to the last line of *The Tempest*, it seems to me self-evident. I have felt, too, the delight of the constantly recurring lyric feeling that is rarely absent from the plays, which no blank verse can disguise, and which, if Shakespeare had not been the greatest dramatist of all time, would have placed him high as a lyric poet."

Again, I am having a happy time with the help of my friend, Mr. Rhys, preparing a series of books to be called The Bedside Library—or some such title—in which we hope to give some comforting, restful little books for all those who love to close the day with the consolation of books, so that I have pleasant and happy occupation in these last years.

Some additional notes may find a place here on my father's own literary contributions, written with many interruptions and under many difficulties at rare intervals in his career. He was proud to reckon himself in some things a follower of Charles Knight, one of the few publishers that became authors, whose book, *Shadows of the Old Booksellers*, still serves to keep his name known. The Chief confessed once to taking cues from Knight's edition of the *British Novelists* in 100 volumes, and *Cabinet Shakespeare*, and he admired the clearness and vigour of that indefatigable editor's prose.

Indeed there are passages in Knight's story of a *Working Life*, that he might have written. This, for instance, which has a note of fond reminiscence after his own heart. In memory, writes Charles Knight, "the people over whose

fortunes I once laughed and cried, rise up once more. Robinson Crusoe is there, leaving the foundered ship upon his raft. Peter Wilkins (does anyone now read that delightful imitation of Defoe?) is at the door of his lonely cabin, holding a lamp as he gazes upon a woman with wings, lying upon the ground as if dead. And there too is Gulliver, in Lilliput, pegged down to mother earth."

As for the list of his own writings, beyond this *Memoir*, it is a brief one. It includes in Everyman's Library the introductions to *Cranford*, in which he recalls his devotion to Mrs. Gaskell; and to Oliver Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*, another favourite story-book. To the Temple Dramatists edition of *She Stoops to Conquer* he contributed the Preface and the Notes. In the Kings Treasuries of Literature, beside *A Shakespeare Progress* already mentioned he compiled in conjunction with Miss Mackie, *A Book of Lighter Prose* and *A Book of Lighter Verse* and in Everyman's Library a collection of *English Short Stories*, which became very popular.

In the miniature series of Everyman Pamphlets, No. 1 contains his interesting essay, or lecture (for he delivered it as such to more than one congenial audience), "On the Making of Books"; and No. 2, his "Story of Everyman," which covers much the same ground as the account given in Chapter VIII. of this volume. The closing pages of the No. 1 pamphlet reflect so much of his own feeling as a craftsman, an old bookbinder and a lifelong book-lover, that some characteristic passages may well be given here. In talking of the early bookbinders and their difficulties, he said:

"In Europe, progress went on slowly, and it is interesting to see how vellum, after puzzling the folder, helped the binder to think of his boards, the indispensable basis of every sound binding. After folding a sheet in two, it was easy to think of 'assembling' and stitching the sheets (one by one at first, later in quires), so as to make up a book. To strengthen the stitching, the threads were passed round strips of vellum or leather, placed at right angles to the back edges of the sheets. It was the 'curly' nature of the vellum which induced the early binder to glue these strips down on to stiff wooden boards. And you have only to examine early specimens of binding to watch these strips growing and extending until they cover the entire surface of the boards and make the binding, as we understand it, complete.

Here, then, was a new and well-defined field on which decorator and craftsmen could exercise their talents.

"The monks who passed their lives in illuminating manuscripts soon learned to extend their art to the bindings. And though they often seem cumbrous to modern taste, we can understand why these rich bindings, encrusted with gems, wrought with precious metals or carved ivory, were prized by their owners long after the invention of printing had made the book more of a document and less of a relic. While London printers were producing their first little tomes in plain brother leather, Tudor Court ladies could be seen wearing little jewelled books, bound in velvet or satin, hanging from their girdles.

"But as with the printed book, so with its binding: it was Aldus Manutius and his fellow printers who began the great tradition. From the East they had learned the art of gilt tooling and brought their earliest designs very near to the pitch of taste and perfection which the French, their disciples, attained in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In England, there was less profusion and variety of design, less delicacy of treatment perhaps, but we have had great binders, like Samuel Mearne and Roger Payne, with an originality of their own and a true instinct for the decorative value of the books they bound.

"A democratic age of printing has come; we have machines which imitate the skilful movements of the old master makers in the space of a few seconds. Industry seems to have separated the modern publisher from the master binder. Yet the gulf is not so wide as it looks, for the book that is hurriedly made will always condemn the maker."

There spoke the true lover of a book, well finished in every part and parcel of it; and to those who remember how fondly he would turn over, and handle and re-handle a well-found, well-bound quarto or octavo, his accents still live in the printed page.

Perhaps we may venture to add here a summing up of his career as a publisher, from the *Times* which appeared after his death.

"Mr. J. M. Dent . . . will be remembered chiefly as the publisher who revolutionized the world of reprints by making new editions, not only cheap, but beautiful. But his qualities as a book-lover, as well as a book-maker, were seen in numbers of other works which issued from his press.

". . . He was born at Darlington in 1849, and he started for himself in London in the early seventies by buying new and secondhand volumes, and, after making them beautiful in extra leather of his own binding, selling them back to the booksellers.

"Comparatively little regard was paid to the outward appearance of most new works in those days. The joint publications of William Pickering and the Chiswick Press, which had delighted book-lovers of the preceding generation, had ceased. If new books were not uncouth or positively ugly, they were too austere and forbidding in their solemn dignity for Mr. Dent's ideas of grace and beauty. His initial success may be attributed to the fact that he was the first to realize how vast a public could be tempted by the world's best literature if presented to it in an attractive and at the same time inexpensive form. A man of ideals, he was justified in his belief that anyone that could thus reach the people, and develope a popular taste for genuine literature, was helping in the cause of culture, and proving a worthy servant to the State.

"With these ideals was blended an uncommonly shrewd commercial instinct, so that in a short time, as publishing records go, he succeeded in building up a business which made his name a household word all over the globe. As soon as he was convinced that he could introduce some new ideas into the book world, Mr. Dent launched out as a publisher by a new edition of Lamb's *Essays*, edited by Mr. Augustine Birrell. The note of distinction in its production was marked at once. *I have never heard of Mr. Dent before*, said the late Bernard Quaritch, when the new publisher's traveller showed him a copy of the large paper edition, 'but if this is his first book, we shall hear from him again.' . . .

"The natural outcome of the Temple Classics was the inauguration ten years later of the cheaper and still more popular Everyman Library. Just as the publisher aimed in the earlier series more at the student than the general reader, so he now made a bold bid to capture the man in the street with the pick of the world's treasures in every branch of literature. Hundreds of half-forgotten masterpieces have been given a new lease of life by this means. 'We are not merely reprinting,' as the publisher once said, 'but are earnestly striving to bring literature fresh to the people, even though it be from old sources.'"

ALDINE HOUSE

EPILOGUE

Knowing I loved my books, he furnish'd me
From mine own library with volumes that
I prize above my dukedom.

"The Tempest": *A Shakespeare Progress.*

I AM in my seventy-third year, and it is time I brought to an end this rambling, yet intimate story of my life, which has been written for my family and friends who have known and loved me, and whom I have loved, and I hope it will evoke for them some happy memories. For in looking back we all find happiness far outweighs the sad and gloomy side of life, and that the mingled fabric has far more good than ill in its texture. These last years of mine have been the happiest of my life. The autumn has not failed in a certain amount of fruitfulness, nor the setting sun in beauty or in hope.

Many of my old friends have already passed over, among them my brother James—the last but one of my father's family, and my close companion and friend. I do not feel as if our communion was ended, but as though our parting is but for the hour—*au revoir*, for indeed we shall shortly meet again.

Nor in this terrible time of peace is my outlook without great hope. As I write these lines we are praying that the treaty with Ireland will really be a substantial thing and that there will be peace between the two peoples, and that the brawling which has gone on for

nearly seven hundred years may cease. At any rate the signs and omens for the future are full of encouragement. I do not pretend to fathom the mystery of the great suffering of the world at this time—the vicarious suffering of mankind—the millions starving in Russia —the birth-pangs of new nations—the ruin and suffering of great Germany brought about by Junker aristocrats —the millions of orphans and widows—the impossibility of millions of honest men getting work by which to live—the detestable new rich who have robbed the labourer of his due, and have fattened on the distress of the people — to contemplate this and much more would drive one into despair. Still, light already penetrates the darkness to give us an assurance for the future of the race. The sordid and horrible war has at least destroyed autocracy—has broken down class distinction and made the world believe that "man's the gowd for a' that." It has awakened the world to a conviction that the potentialities of the race are in the child, and that its chief effort must be to let the child have free growth and wide outlook. One of my strong hopes in Great Britain is based on the keen and earnest desire awakening in the best minds of the nation that education shall be interpreted to mean the teaching of mankind to live and not how to get a living. Indeed I do most honestly feel, that the world is more full of men of good will than it was when I was young —fifty years ago—that the salt of the earth has not lost its savour, and the quest of the Grail is more constant and eager than it has ever been. I dare even to believe that the comity of nations is nearer than it has ever been before in my time and that the East is drawing nearer to the West, and the West to the East, indeed a nobler world is being born.

I know that to many of my friends this will only read as foolish optimism that has no root in knowledge,

and I confess, if asked for facts and data, that I could not give them; but old men have a right to prophesy and I can hear Isaiah calling to the Watchman, "What of the night?" and the Watchman's reply coming from the far distant hills, "The night is departing."

THE REMAINING YEARS

1920–1926

by

HUGH R. DENT

THE REMAINING YEARS

1920–1926

IN 1919 my father's sound leg which had carried him well for sixty years began to give him pain. The doctor told him the cause was sciatica and prescribed a course of treatment at Harrogate, where he stayed for a few weeks, returning home with the pain greatly relieved but not entirely gone. During the next twelve months he struggled against the pain and the increasing difficulty of walking any distance, until in November 1920 he was sent away again for hydropathic treatment, this time to Bath. There he was fortunate in having friends at Citizen House, Mrs. Sharp and her daughter Doris, who helped him to enjoy the intervals between the necessary baths. He returned home about the middle of December, feeling much better, and for a time went regularly to the office, but it was soon evident to himself and to all of us, his co-workers, that he must limit sharply the amount of his daily work if he wished to take any active part in the publishing business.

It was during this period of illness and convalescence that most of the foregoing pages were written, and he found much enjoyment in recalling and recording his memories, early and late.

From the time when he wrote these Memoirs he began to feel the slow decay of his physical strength, yet his spirit remained as young and enthusiastic as it was in the prime of life. New people and new ideas, especially if connected with education, were warmly welcomed and he gave of his best in response to their appeals.

As he gradually delegated his daily work and responsibility at the office, he was able to devote more time to work for the Committee of New Ideals in Education, The League of Nations, The British Armenian Relief Committee, The Caldicott Community, The Harpenden Montessori Trust, the Council of the British and Foreign School Society and the Nursery School Movement. Miss Margaret McMillan, for whose work he had a great admiration, has contributed to an earlier chapter some notes on his connection with her Nursery School at Deptford. His own work on the Council of the British and Foreign School Society brought him in touch with Miss Hawtrey, then Principal of the Society's Teachers' Training College at his native town Darlington, who was keenly interested in the local Nursery School. She and my father had many common ideals and he found her friendship both helpful and inspiring.

In May 1918 some difficulty arose about the building in which the Nursery School was held, so that unless new premises were found quickly the School might have temporarily to be closed. Then Miss Hawtrey heard that an old house, Fairfield, was to be sold quickly, and as it promised to be very suitable for the School she suggested to the Council that the Society should purchase the house. Unluckily the members of the Council were all dispersed on holiday, and as there was no time to lose, she appealed to my father, who bought the house and took the risk of the Council's agreeing to purchase it from him. The School paid a rent for the use of the house until June 1920 when the Society bought it and he contributed a substantial sum towards the cost. The Council acknowledged his interest in the School by naming it the George Dent Nursery School after his father, who lived most of his life in Darlington and died there, and Miss Hawtrey placed

Memorial Tablet at the George Dent Nursery School, Darlington

in the hall of Fairfield a carved wooden plaque with a dedication to the memory of my grandfather. My father desired to have a more permanent memorial, and a few weeks before his death planned a bronze memorial plate consisting of a Donatello child's head with memorial lettering, but was unable to complete the design. After his death it seemed to me fitting that the memorial should be of his father and himself, and I was fortunate in arranging for the beautiful piece of work in bronze by Mr. Laurence A. Turner (shown in the accompanying plate) to be fixed on the entrance to the School; and the tablet was unveiled by the Mayor of Darlington on 28 September, 1926.

To return to his home life. The lease of Hill Lodge, Enfield, ran out in June 1920, and once more my father had to go house-hunting. At that time I was living at South Croydon and, after failing to find anything satisfactory north of London, he turned to the south side of the river, and finally purchased Crohamleigh, in South Croydon. Here the last few years of his life were spent in comparative quiet, but I know that he missed very greatly the charming garden and beautiful trees which had given him so much pleasure for many years at Hill Lodge.

Here also in August 1924 most of the members of his family gathered together at his house, Crohamleigh, to celebrate his seventy-fifth birthday. It was a brilliant, sunny Saturday afternoon, and he was exceedingly happy with his children and grandchildren about him. Fortunately his American friends Miss Scudder and Mrs. and Miss Converse were at that time in England, and they added to his pleasure by coming to the family party and greeting him upon his birthday.

Meanwhile in December 1920 I was able to purchase the freehold of Aldine House in Bedford Street and

he was delighted to know that the building to which he had given so much care and thought was at last entirely our own.

Although in 1920 he gave up the oversight of the financial and manufacturing branches of the business, his interest in new books and the details of their production was keen to the end. He arranged many books with authors, and in particular supervised the format of the Collected Editions of Joseph Conrad, 1923–4, Augustine Birrell's Essays, 1922, W. H. Hudson, 1922–3, and George Saintsbury's Essays, 1923–4. His love of music led him also to give a hearty welcome to Dr. Eaglefield Hull's idea of a "Dictionary of Modern Music," and to the other musical works we have published under his editorship.

He knew he would not see fulfilled his fond dream of a Thousand Volumes in Everyman's Library, but he continued to discuss and arrange with Mr. Rhys many of the new volumes issued before and after his death.

The Kings Treasuries too occupied much of his time and thought. During these last few years nearly seventy volumes were added to the series, bringing the number up to one hundred and forty. It was a great pleasure for him to know that this collection had proved to be of such signal service in the teaching of English literature in schools.

In the autumn of 1921 we published an English edition of a book of Christmas pictures by children in Professor Čizek's school at Vienna, who at that time were suffering severely from privation due to the war. Some of the original water-colours were exhibited in London and roused much friendly interest. Many of the pictures were original both in idea and treatment, and my father thought it might be possible for some of these child-artists to earn a little money by drawing coloured illustrations for English school readers. This

idea was put before Professor Čizek by Miss Florence Wilson of the Friends' Relief Mission at Vienna and a few trial drawings were made. They proved unsuitable, however, and as it was difficult to make our needs understood through the post, my father decided to go to Vienna, and spend two or three weeks in Italy on the way back. His wife was too unwell to go with him, but luckily his friend Miss Mackie was then in Italy and most generously arranged to give him all her time whilst he was in that country and to accompany him home as far as Paris. He went straight to Vienna, arriving there on 30 April, 1922, and with Miss Wilson's help was able to see Professor Čizek with his artist children at the School, when he was delighted with the work being done there. Illustrations by the children for a book of Fairy Tales were arranged, but a few months later, through some misunderstanding of their own difficulties and our needs, the scheme was dropped, and deeply he regretted his failure to help the little Viennese artists in their struggle to earn a living.

From Vienna he went to Venice on 7 May. Here he was met by Miss Mackie upon whose help and affectionate care he was wholly dependent for the next three weeks. The recurrent sciatica often gave him pain and tried him sorely when walking in the churches, museums and galleries that he wished so much to see again. In Venice and Florence he was welcomed by his old friends Mrs. Janet Ross, Mr. Horatio Brown, Signor Biagi, Professor Marchi and his daughter, Miss Adelaide Marchi. In renewing these friendships and seeing again some of his favourite pictures he seemed to recapture some of that ecstatic joy so often expressed in his earlier letters from Italy. The recollection of his first visit there, and the inspiration it brought him at the time of his hardest struggle, seemed to renew his youthful spirit and almost to subdue his bodily suffering.

In Paris, through the kindness of Mlle. Boussinesq, he was invited to the Kindergarten of the Lycée Victor Duruy, where the Montessori method is used; a system in which he was so much interested that for a time he was a member of the Society founded by the Dottoressa. Some of the little ones showed him how they kept their own rooms tidy and put their things away whilst others sang old French songs. He came away delighted with the work and charmed by the children.

From Paris he went with Miss Mackie on a journey through the devastated War fields, hoping to find at Neuve Chapelle the scene of his son Paxton's death and at Bethune the actual spot where he was buried. After a long cold car-ride, picking up a clue here, only to lose it again elsewhere, the travellers returned sadly disappointed.

On 30 May he was back in London, tired in body, but greatly refreshed in mind and spirit, and very happy to have seen once more his old Italian friends and his beloved Italy.

Changes in the working staff of a large business are bound to come, and after seven years of good work with the Chief, Dr. R. Wilson in June 1923 resigned his position as educational adviser and editor, and his place was not filled until Mr. Guy N. Pocock came to us twelve months later. Though he arrived so near the end—within the last two years of the Chief's life—my father enjoyed greatly his close collaboration with Mr. Pocock, who entered heartily into the work of editing the Kings Treasuries with Sir A. T. Quiller-Couch, and the many other educational books that have been published since he associated himself with the business.

For many years the Chief had turned over in his mind a scheme to produce a series of Reference Books for Young People to be used by them in their work at school. He had seen the Dalton method at work here

and in the United States, and was convinced of its good effect, but he saw that the children lacked the books necessary for their studies. There were, of course, the large Encyclopædias, but they were written for men and women, and not entirely suitable, so he decided to prepare a series that would be not only useful as reference books, but offer first-rate interesting reading for young people. After many talks with Miss Mackie and Dr. Wilson he decided to begin with the books treating of Science, as everyone acknowledged that they would be the most difficult to write. He put his plans before Sir Oliver Lodge, who became sufficiently interested in the scheme to promise the volume on Physics. Then he approached Professor J. A. Thomson and arranged to go to Scotland to discuss the possibility of his writing the book on Biology. In August 1923 he went to the Island of Arran and stayed a few days with Professor Thomson at his holiday house, where they threshed out the details and plan of the work. It was finally decided to write as far as possible a consecutive story of life from the lowest form of organism up to the highest—Man—and to provide paragraph headings and a full Index with ample cross references so that the book could be used for reference as well as reading. The Chief returned to London and put the details arranged for the Biology before Sir Oliver Lodge, who agreed to prepare his volume on the same lines. The books have taken longer to prepare than was expected, but they are now nearing completion.

This, the last series projected by the Chief, was very dear to his heart, partly because of the difficulties surmounted in planning it, but chiefly because he was so sure it would be of great service in the education of the young—a problem which had enlisted and held his enthusiastic devotion from the time of his connection with Toynbee Hall in the nineties.

Earlier in this book he has himself acknowledged the influence of Toynbee Hall, and often in his later years he told me of his desire to help the movement if opportunity came, and if none should occur during his lifetime he asked me to remember it and to mark his indebtedness in some concrete form. Fortunately the chance came to himself. He made a contribution to the Maintenance fund at the moment when the Warden was so much occupied with the planning of the John Benn Hostel and the Milner Hall that he was forced to neglect the immediate financial needs of Toynbee. The Warden and Council, in order to perpetuate my father's connection with Toynbee, have attached his name to the Drawing Room, which is now called the Dent Room.

At odd times even before the War we had discussed the possibility and usefulness of a House journal which would tell those interested in books something of our ventures and our aims, but nothing was done until the autumn of 1924 when the idea was again brought forward and *The Bookmark* was produced. The Chief warmly approved of the scheme and of the magazine's policy, as was set out in the following paragraphs which appeared in the first number issued in the spring of 1925:

To make a book well is at once our business, and our pride; to make it well-known is a more difficult and uncertain task. It is primarily to improve the efficiency of the latter end of our business, and to give wider diffusion and better publicity to our books, that we offer this the first number of *The Bookmark*.

For the best book in the world without its reading public is like a masterpiece of art hung on a cellar wall or a great opera sung to an empty theatre; a book is unfulfilled, indeed can scarcely be said to exist at all, until it is in the hands of the sort of people for whom it was written. Very many good books fail simply because the people who want them do not hear about them, and it is our sincere hope

that this little magazine will be accepted by the public as a genuine and reliable source of information about books and authors, and will give real service in the interests of literature.

The Bookmark will be published quarterly, and will announce our policy and progress, our ideals and achievement; it will contain articles of general and particular interest by authors, known and unknown, extracts from our publications, notices of books newly published and in preparation, illustrations of persons and things of interest in the world of books. The great classics of English literature which are so well represented in our catalogue are in themselves a mine of inexhaustible interest and re-discovery; indeed our catalogue is so comprehensive and so widely varied that we have little fear of being dull.

To the second number published three months later the Chief contributed an article on "The Birth of the Book" and in the following number one on "The Art of Printing." He wished to write others on Bookbinding and Publishing, but in the late autumn of 1925 his physical handicaps became too great for any writing or reading. His interest in *The Bookmark* never abated, however, and he made many suggestions for its format and contents.

Early in January 1924 he presided for the last time at the annual Christmas party in Letchworth, and for the last time spent a festive and happy evening with the men and women who had worked for him so loyally and who were delighted to hear him talk once more of the present aims of the business and his hopes for the future. He had always delighted in these festivals and every year threw himself with characteristic zest into the fun and amusements which were arranged by our people at Letchworth.

In July 1925, under the auspices of the Overseas Education League, a hundred teachers from the Dominions —but largely from Canada—visited the Printing and Binding Works at Letchworth and were afterwards

entertained by the firm at Letchworth Hall Hotel, where they were welcomed by the Chief as founder of the firm and Chairman of the Company. He greatly enjoyed greeting so many teachers from Canada, Australia and New Zealand, although it was a real strain on his physical strength. He told them of his faith in the future of Canada, which he had visited many times, and of the greatness of the teacher's calling and of their own personal responsibility for the training and education of the men and women of the future.

The wintry season of 1925–6 he found very trying and looked forward hopefully to the advent of spring, but at Eastertide it was evident the rigours of winter had so severely sapped his strength that he could come but rarely to London, and then but for an hour or two. On 8 May my wife and I went to Croydon to spend the Saturday afternoon with him. He talked away in his brightest manner about literature and art, memories of his family and old friends, the loveliness of trees and flowers, the books recently published and those going through the press at the moment, and of his great hopes for the future. There was no sign of any approaching collapse and we returned home feeling very happy about him.

Early the next morning he had a slight attack of heart failure, and within half an hour passed quietly into that future life which he believed would give wider opportunities for the development of all that is best in us.

He was buried in Sanderstead Churchyard on 13 May in the presence of over one hundred of his friends, business associates and employees from London and Letchworth, who had come—despite the difficulties created by the general strike—to express admiration and affection for their Chief and to bid him a sad and silent farewell.

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